MODERN DRUMMER™

The International Magazine Exclusively For Drummers

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JULY 1986

Billy Cobham

BON JOVI'S Tico Torres

Jeff Hamilton

Readers Poll Results

Plus:

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Pete Magadini On Polyrhythmic Solos
Ed Soph On Fusion • Inside Noble & Cooley

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Features

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BILLY COBHAM

Since moving to Switzerland a few years ago, Billy Cobham's popularity in the U.S. had been on the decline, but now he's back with a new album and a new commitment to regain his former position at the top.
by William F. Miller 16

TICO TORRES

While his work with Bon Jovi proves Tico Torres to be a consummate rock drummer, it is only one aspect of his varied career and background,
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Jeff Hamilton wanted to do the near impossible: make a living playing only the music he believed in. And Jeff was just stubborn enough to pull it off!
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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Shelly Manne Scholarship Winner

Congratulations to Richard F. Craig, Jr., winner of the 1986 *MD Shelly Manne Memorial Scholarship.* This year, the scholarship was coordinated through the Percussion Institute of Technology (PIT), a division of the Musicians Institute in Hollywood, California.

Rick Craig, a 23-year-old drummer from St. Petersburg, Florida, has been playing drums for 18 years. Following high school graduation, Rick enrolled at the University of South Florida in Tampa, where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Music in 1985. During college, Rick taught percussion for several Tampa Bay area high schools, performed with the University of South Florida Jazz Orchestra, and pursued further private drumming instruction on a limited basis with Peter Erskine in New York, and David Garibaldi in Los Angeles.

Throughout college, Rick also engaged in a variety of musical endeavors, ranging from performances with the West Coast Symphony Orchestra as an extra percussionist, to drumming in shows behind artists like Doc Severinson, Dinah Shore, Marilyn McCoo, and Sergio Franchi. Rick's drumming interests have also extended to small jazz groups, funk, and big band settings. Currently, he is performing with a contemporary fusion band called Tapaztry.

Playing since the age of five, Rick credits Omar Hakim, Peter Erskine, Steve Gadd, Elvin Jones, Dave Weckl, and Mel Lewis as the drummers who have had the greatest influence on his playing. His immediate goals are to continue to develop and expand conceptually as a player, and gain even further experience in various facets of drumming. Ultimately, Rick hopes to become a proficient session drummer and apply that ability in the Los Angeles recording studios.

The *Shelly Manne Memorial Scholarship* is open to any drummer, age 18 or over, with aspirations for a professional career in drumming, and the potential to achieve that goal. This is demonstrated through good basic skills in the areas of technique, coordination, time conception, reading, ensemble playing, and solo work. The recipient should also be able to show some degree of versatility through his or her ability in more than one phase of drumming. For example, any applicant who can demonstrate performance skills in rock, jazz, and big band would be given greater consideration than an individual skilled in only one specialized area.

Richard Craig was selected for the *Shelly Manne Memorial Scholarship* from a group of applicants, each of whom submitted background information and a taped performance demonstrating his or her playing in both a solo and ensemble format. All applicants were pre-screened by the PIT Scholarship Committee. Resumes and tapes were then forwarded to the *MD* home office, where the final winner was selected from the top five finalists. Once again, *Modern Drummer* extends its sincere congratulations to Richard F. Craig, Jr., and wishes him success in all his future musical endeavors.

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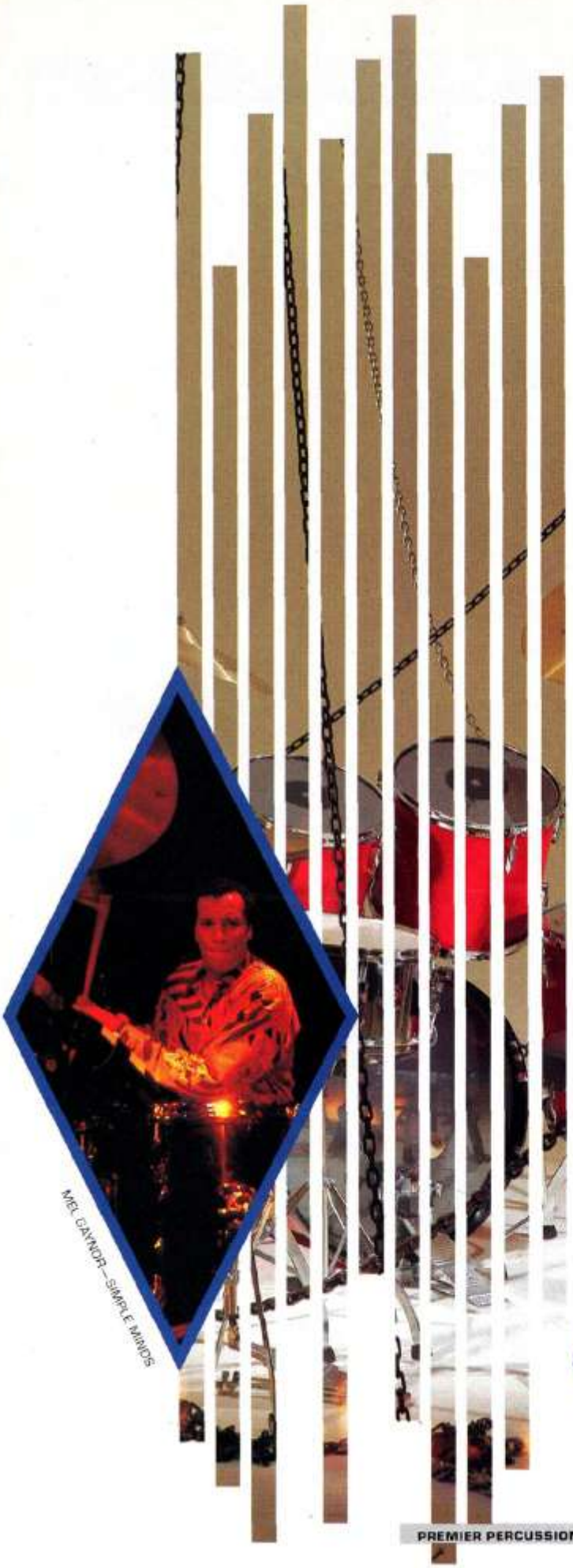

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READERS' PLATFORM

ED SHAUGHNESSY

I'm writing in appreciation of the article on Ed Shaughnessy in the April '86 issue. I think Ed is one of the finest drummers in the world, and he's also a wonderful human being. God bless him. I was fortunate enough to attend one of his clinics back in 1978, in Winnipeg, Canada. I was 18 at the time, and it was a thrill. Ed was great, and he cares about the younger drummers. I hope I can set as good an example for up-and-coming drummers as Ed has done and continues to do.

Curtis Osmundson
Minneapolis, MN

WORKING WITH MACHINES

As a long-time reader of *Modern Drummer,* I would like to thank you for the information and inspiration that has helped me to improve and expand my playing. I would like to return a little information that may be helpful to others. Over the last 15 years, I went from playing congas and bongos to timbales, and finally to playing a whole kit. Playing as a percussionist, jobs seemed to be few and far between (because of the extra cost involved with having both a percussionist and a set drummer.) As a set drummer, I had a lot to learn, so consequently, the people I could play with were not on the same level as the people I played percussion with. It was a very frustrating situation, to say the least!

I have since found a solution that may appeal to others in a similar situation. I answered an ad seeking a percussionist to play with a drum machine, and have since opened up a whole new area for myself. I had the good fortune to meet a very forward-thinking keyboard player, and between the concepts he introduced me to and my own experience and initiative, we have evolved a unique and dynamic percussion core for our trio. I have purchased a very sophisticated drum box of my own, and use it in conjunction with my other acoustic and electronic instruments. I have my congas and bongos set up, and next to them is what is essentially the top half of my drumkit. It consists of my timbales, with an electronic snare in the center of them, three electronic toms up above them, an extended hi-hat, and both a ride cymbal and some crash cymbals. I play it all standing up. I do all the programming of the machine, and use different combinations of sounds for different songs. If I want to play congas or timbales, I put a whole kit in the box; if I want to play drums, I just put in what is missing and play the rest myself. The results have dynamics, depth, and consistency, plus the excitement of a person playing. My machine sounds great and does what I tell it to, and I don't have to split my pay with it. My point is that machines don't always eliminate jobs; they may also create them. The opportunity exists for those with foresight.

Steve Morrocco
Wrentham. MA

TED McKENNA

I strongly disagree with the statement, made by Ted McKenna in the April issue of your magazine, that "Listening to rock records is hardly the way to study drumming." I learned more bass drum runs and patterns from Dino Danelli of the Rascals just by listening than most of the rock drummers I know ever dreamed of. I also learned how to coordinate bass drum and bass guitar rhythms. Dino was in the top-ten drummers of the world at the time—from '65 to '70—and was well respected by jazz as well as rock drummers. He really influenced my playing. To this day, when I sit in with people, they ask me, "Where did you learn that stuff?"

I know that jazz is really different and a lot more expandable, but there are a lot of good rock 'n' rollers that learned from playing records and listening to their favorite players. I'm sure Ted McKenna will be interested to know that I also have the *Tear Gas* album mentioned in your profile of him, and I've always enjoyed it and Ted's drumming. I just have this to say: Whether it be rock or jazz, be open-minded and just respect the other person.

Ralph Trunell
Pittsburgh, PA

JERRY MAROTTA

I guess I won't be the only drummer who will want to tell Jerry Marotta [March '86 *MD]* that it wasn't Gene Krupa who invented or popularized the idea of playing on the bass strings while the bass player fingered. It was the great—and still underrated—Ray Bauduc. If Bauduc didn't invent it, he certainly brought it to the public on "Big Noise From Winnetka," with bass player Bob Haggart.

Bruce Morley
Kohukohu, New Zealand

Editor's Note: Mr. Morley is correct in saying that Ray Bauduc should be given most of the credit for developing the idea of playing on the strings of an upright bass with drumsticks. However, many drummers imitated the technique, including Krupa. Because of Krupa's fame and visibility, it is not entirely wrong to give him a certain amount of credit for exposing the technique to a wider audience.

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UPDATE

Jason Bonham was more interested in Motocross racing than in playing the drums—until his father, Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham, died in 1980. "It put kind of a light on for me," Jason says. "I thought, 'I'm going to carry on my father's name.' " So Jason gave up Motocross (he placed second in one England championship) and concentrated on the drumming he began at age four. "When you're a kid, you learn to read and write. I learned to play the drums at the same time."

By age five, Jason says, he'd learned enough to play 4/4 time on a miniature drumkit his dad bought for him in Japan. "I had to have the hi-hat closed, because I couldn't

reach it. I learned by sitting in my room, playing to records." He listened to the hits of the day—"a lot of Bad Company records. Occasionally, my dad would come in and say, 'Hey, that's good,' or 'Try that again.' "

Jason's first band was Airrace, an English group that recorded one album for Atlantic Records and toured with Queen in Europe before breaking up. "The drumming is not exceptional," Jason now says of the Airrace album. "I was doing what the producer told me to do." Now, Jason is his own drummer. "I'll play like Jason Bonham and not anybody else."

He is currently doing that with the English band Virginia Wolf. Roger Taylor of Queen, who produced Wolf's debut album, recommended Jason to the group. Wolf had already begun recording when Jason came in. "We just jammed for ages. It clicked." The group ended up rerecording all but one of the tracks with Jason. Following the release of the album, Wolf went on tour with The Firm.

Jason realizes he must face the inevitable comparisons to his father. "We're both very solid," he says. "Obviously, I've got a few years to catch up with." Jason sees his dad as more of an inspiration than a direct influence. "I think just his being who he was was encouraging," he says. "It's a good challenge for me."

Jason, 19, considers himself a "simple and effective, straightforward drummer. I'm not the best technician, but I play my ass off." He doesn't rehearse, preferring to get on stage and play whatever comes into his head. "No two nights are ever the same."

—Lori Mirrer

Joey Kramer is in the middle of a world tour with Aerosmith and really enjoying it. "It's amazing. Everybody has really grown and matured to the point where we all get along now," he says. "We hang out together, and all the wives and girlfriends are friends, so there's not a lot of bullshit going on. We've managed to funnel that into the direction of the band and unify everyone's individual strength, as opposed to trying to go against one another. It's working really well, and everyone is in a great frame of mind.

"We had a lot of ground to cover in that we had to reestablish our name and put ourselves back on the map. We did two tours of secondary markets in the last couple of years, without a record. Most bands who do a reunion go out with an album, but we were out solely on the strength of the original lineup of the band being back together. After that, we did the record *Done With Mirrors* last July in Berkeley. We recorded the album in three weeks with Ted Templeman, who I enjoyed working with immensely. It was a treat for me, because I had never really been satisfied with the production in the past. I think Ted captured the sound of the band truer to its form. Also, by virtue of his being in the middle of the scene all the time, he has a much better handle on the modern and current sound. We couldn't just go back and do what we did in the '70s. We updated it as much as possible, and I think he's responsible for capturing the sound of the band better than anyone else in the

Photo by Robert Herman

studio. We all had a really good time making the record, and that's plain to see by listening to it."

Since power is needed to play the music, Joey says it is important to take care of himself on the road. "I get lots of sleep. That's the real key thing. It's basically about taking care of yourself properly, and not overindulging in anything or abusing yourself. When you do that, you may not feel it for the first couple of days, but down the road it will catch up with you. When I was 22 years old, it was one thing, but now that's not possible. I've always looked at it as a challenge to myself, and I've always liked the challenge. I don't think there are a whole lot of musicians out there who are 35 and doing what I'm doing. I like that. We're out there doing it the same way we always did; we jump around like a bunch of 20 year olds. We have such a good time that anybody watching us has to have a good time, too. Nothing is getting in the way of that anymore."

—Robyn Flans

As a member of the Bears, **Chris Arduser** is afforded the opportunity to live in Ohio while playing music he enjoys. "It's very hard to play in Toledo, Ohio, unless you just want to be in a basic top-40 band. There's weekend work, but that's about it. I was wondering what I was going to do at the time they called me, because I was playing in a great rhythm & blues band, but the music was not on the radio. It's real hard to stay alive in the Midwest, but that is where I grew up; my girlfriend lives there, and I can commute and play with those guys. Before this happened, I was going to have to move somewhere, though, so it's really nice now."

Chris knew Adrian Belew ten years ago, when he and other Bear members were in a popular Cincinnati group, the Raisins. When Larrie Londin was unable to resume his role as a member of the Bears, it was natural for the other members to call Chris. And Chris says it seems very natural to be playing with them.

"The only thing really required of me as a drummer is that I have a very healthy imagination. We never really know what the next tune is going to be like. No one tells anyone what to play, and everyone is involved in the writing, so we really have to be ready to think. Our songs are pretty structured, but while we're developing the songs, we do a lot of improvising to find out what feels right. It is an interesting band. On stage, the forms of the songs are very structured, but within that form, everyone has a certain amount of freedom. We don't have to play the same part every single night the same way."

There is a record currently in the works, although Chris says, "The music is decidedly

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In The Current Issue Of ***MODERN PERCUSSIONIST***

Mike Mainieri

From his work with Buddy Rich in the late '50s to his current activities in the studios and with Steps Ahead, vibist Mike Mainieri has always been at the forefront of style and technique. In this *MP* exclusive, he discusses his career and explains how MIDI is helping him bring the vibes into the contemporary music scene.

Repercussion Unit

Whether it's a serious new music concert or a Fourth of July parade, John Bergamo, Jim Hildebrandt, Gregg Johnson, Ed Mann, Lucky Mosko, and Larry Stein bring the same combination of musicianship, exploration, and fun into whatever they are involved in.

Photo by Jaeger Katos

Ray Mantilla

Mantilla's combination of jazz and Latin music has made him in demand with such artists as Dizzy Gillespie, M'Boom, and Herbie Mann, as well as his own group, Space Station.

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Arduser continued from page 6
not in the vein that is on the radio right now, so we're not getting an amazing response from the record moguls. The audiences are going bananas, and I think the record companies see that the band could become something that would be popular, but it's kind of unusual sounding. I think it's pretty useless to try to figure out what the record company people are thinking, though. We just write the song we want to write and then give it to them."

By the way, Chris assures us, "The Chicago Bears had not become quite a household name when we thought of the name. We weren't jumping on any bandwagon," he laughs.

—Robyn Flans

Pat Mastellotto is enjoying the best of both worlds: the success of Mr. Mister and studio work. "This band will give us the financial security to be able to pick and choose the projects we like," Pat says. And indeed, he likes recording. Last year, he worked on records by Nick Gilder, Danny Wilde, Rob Jungklas, and Vanity, in addition to Mr. Mister's album, of course.

"Musically, this group is fantastic, because we get to do whatever we want," Pat

explains. "Usually, you've got producers or artists who tell you what they want done. That's great and it gives you direction, but sometimes you'd like to do it differently. With this band, we can indulge ourselves to a degree. I did most of the drum stuff on the album when the band wasn't there. It was just me and Paul [DeVilliers, producer] late at night. We'd indulge ourselves and keep trying things. The next morning, the rest of the guys would come in and hear what we'd done. I had never been involved in a mix before, but we mixed with a computer where we could each go in individually, do our own mix, and log it onto the computer. I feel weird asking a producer to make three or four snare sounds on one song, but on our record, we do that all the time." Having recently returned from a European tour, Pat is now in the studio with Mr. Mister.

—Robyn Flans

Max Weinberg, drummer for the E Street Band, has been keeping busy with a lecture tour of colleges, while not on the road with Bruce Springsteen. During this lecture series, Weinberg reflects upon his experiences and successes with Springsteen over the last 12 years.

Max begins with a slide presentation of his boyhood. He was a "kid with a dream." When Max was five years old, he saw Elvis Presley on the *Ed Sullivan Show.* "It was absolutely amazing how Elvis and his band came into our living room. I immediately keyed in on D. J. Fontana, Elvis' original drummer," he says. By the age of ten, Max knew he wanted to be a rock 'n' roll drummer, and his parents were with him all the way.

Ringo Starr was the main influence in Max's early drumming years. Weinberg recalls that, when the Beatles hit the scene, he started "to realize the possibility of what playing drums could be."

Max began to fulfill his dream when he answered a want ad in the *Village Voice* for the E Street Band. "At the audition, Bruce set the pace right away," Max says. "Like magic, it fell into place. Right in the middle of the next tune Bruce cut the band, and I was right with them. That's when I passed the audition."

Weinberg recalls that it wasn't always easy and fun with the band. "The band works really hard to keep things happening and intact," he says. Max went through many hard times with the band: the lawsuit between Bruce and his former manager that kept the band from recording from '76 to '79, the lessons with Sonny Igoe when Max realized his time wasn't holding up, and the seven operations on his hands for advanced tendinitis. He says these times showed him that there is more to it than just dreaming. Hard work and determination are the key.

When his hands were healing, Max couldn't play the drums, so he wrote a book, *The Big Beat.* Max considers this his "solo record, because it gives something to the history and development of rock 'n' roll." This book contains conversations with 14 of rock's greatest drummers. Max's biggest thrill came when he interviewed Ringo Starr. "I got to ask my hero everything I ever wanted to ask him," he says.

Max reflects on a special moment when he came out to his car one night and found a note on the window that, he says, touched the little kid in him. It said, "Your drumming really inspires me. You're like my Ringo Starr." Max says, "I feel I've come full circle. I can pass on a dream."

—Elaine Cannizzaro

Jeff Porcaro on Whitney Houston's new album. **Eddie Bayers** on recent or upcoming releases by Johnny Lee, Shelly West, Pam Tillis, Sweethearts of the Rodeo, Michael Johnson, George Strait, Nicolette Larsen, Ricky Skaggs, Sylvia, Reba McEntire, and Alabama. **Tris Imboden** on new albums by Jeff Berlin, Gino Vannelli, Howard Hewitt, and Stanley Clarke. **Kenny Malone** on an album by Stephane Grappelli and Vassar Clements. Very in demand as a producer is **Narada Michael Walden,** who has been producing/playing on recent projects by George Bensen, Whitney Houston, Aretha Franklin, and his own solo album due out in the fall. **Peter Donald** and **Ralph Humphrey** on The Larry Steelman Project. **Frankie Banali** working on Andy Taylor's solo project. Frankie can also be heard on Quiet Riot's album, which was due out last month, and on an album by Kuni Takauchi, which will be released next month. **Rod Morgenstein** on the road with Zeno. **Mickey Grimm** on the road with Sweethearts of the Rodeo. **Levon Helm** has an acting role in the upcoming film, *The Man Outside.* **Phil Collins** is producing Eric Clapton's new album, as well as playing drums on it. **Vinny Appice** on tour with Dio. **Tommy Aldridge** working in a new band called Driver. **Rick Marrotta** on the road with Stevie Nicks. This month, **Butch Miles** can be seen at the Indianapolis Jazz Festival, the Menlo Park Jazz Party, and the 92nd Street Y.M.H.A. with Dick Hyman. Detroit's **Sirius Trixon** is currently writing, producing, singing, and playing drums with The Inspectors of Cool. He is also playing shows with the Caravan of Stars and getting ready to do a reunion tour with his old Detroit band, Sirius Trixon & The Motor City Bad Boys. **Lloyd Herrman** has been touring the U.S., Japan, and Europe with Gatemouth Brown. **Larry Crockett** touring with Martha Reeves & The Vandellas. **Bob Moses** in the studio working on a two-record set to be called *The Story OfMoses.* **Eddie Marshall** is on the faculty of the Stanford Jazz Workshop, to be held in August.

—Robyn Flans

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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. I have a Tama five-piece *Superstar* set, and would like advice on how to tune my drums and on what heads to use in order to obtain maximum volume. I play in a band and I can't afford mic's right now. The heads I'm currently using are *Pinstripes* on the tops of my 12" and 13" toms, with *Hydraulics* on the bottoms of those drums as well as on the top and bottom of my 16" floor tom. I use a *Pinstripe* on my snare batter, and a CS *Black Dot* on my 22" bass drum. Your suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

T.S.
Glenwood, MD

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Union, NJ

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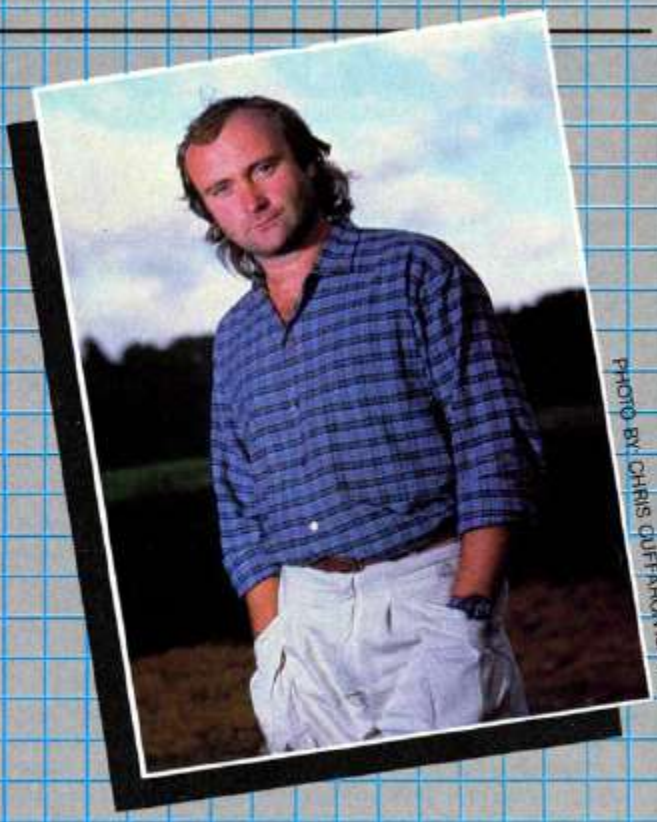

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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. I have a Tama five-piece *Superstar set,* and would like advice on how to tune my drums and on what heads to use in order to obtain maximum volume. I play in a band and I can't afford mic's right now. The heads I'm currently using are *Pinstripes* on the tops of my 12" and 13" toms, with *Hydraulics* on the bottoms of those drums as well as on the top and bottom of my 16" floor tom. I use a *Pinstripe* on my snare batter, and a CS *Black Dot* on my 22" bass drum. Your suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

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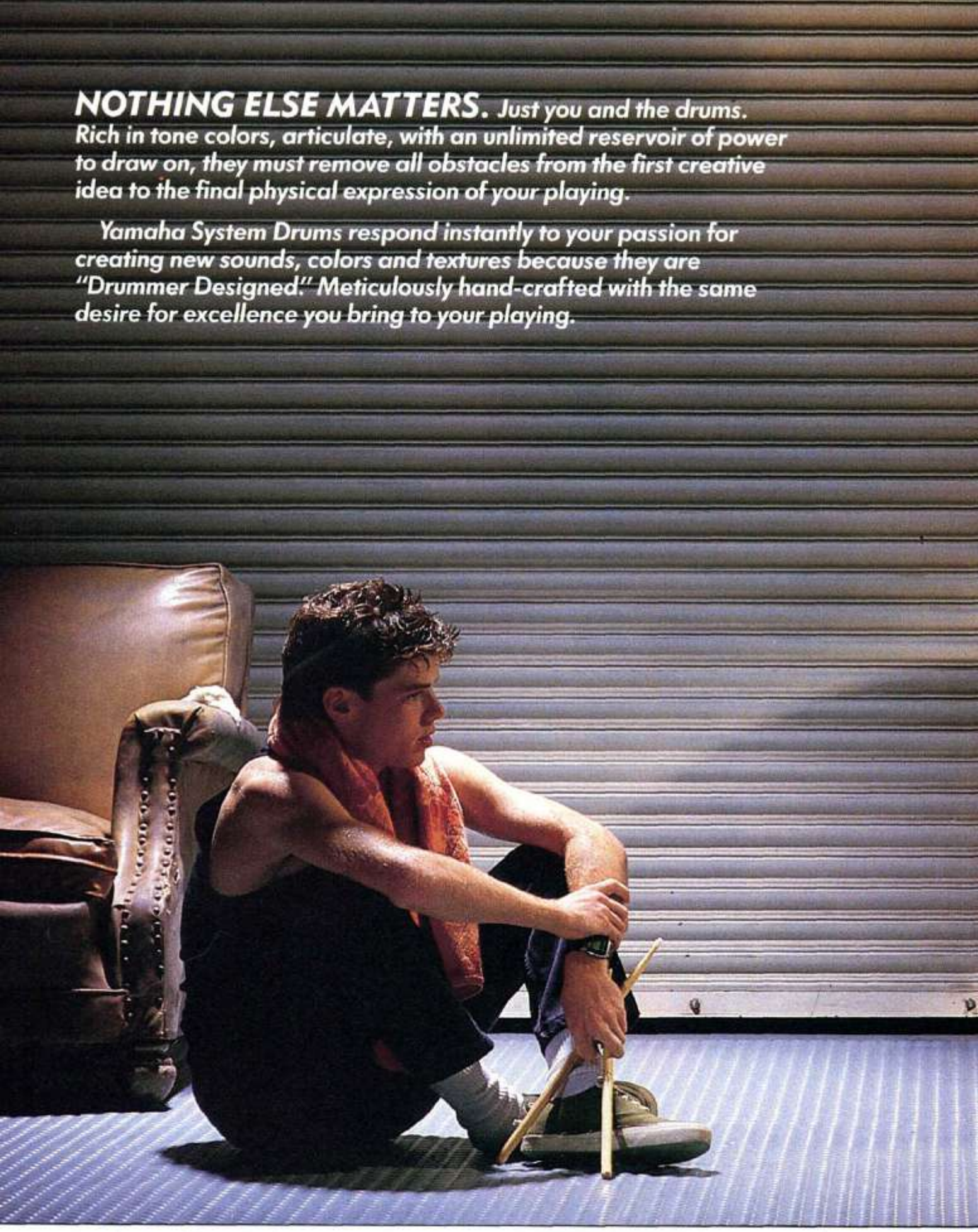

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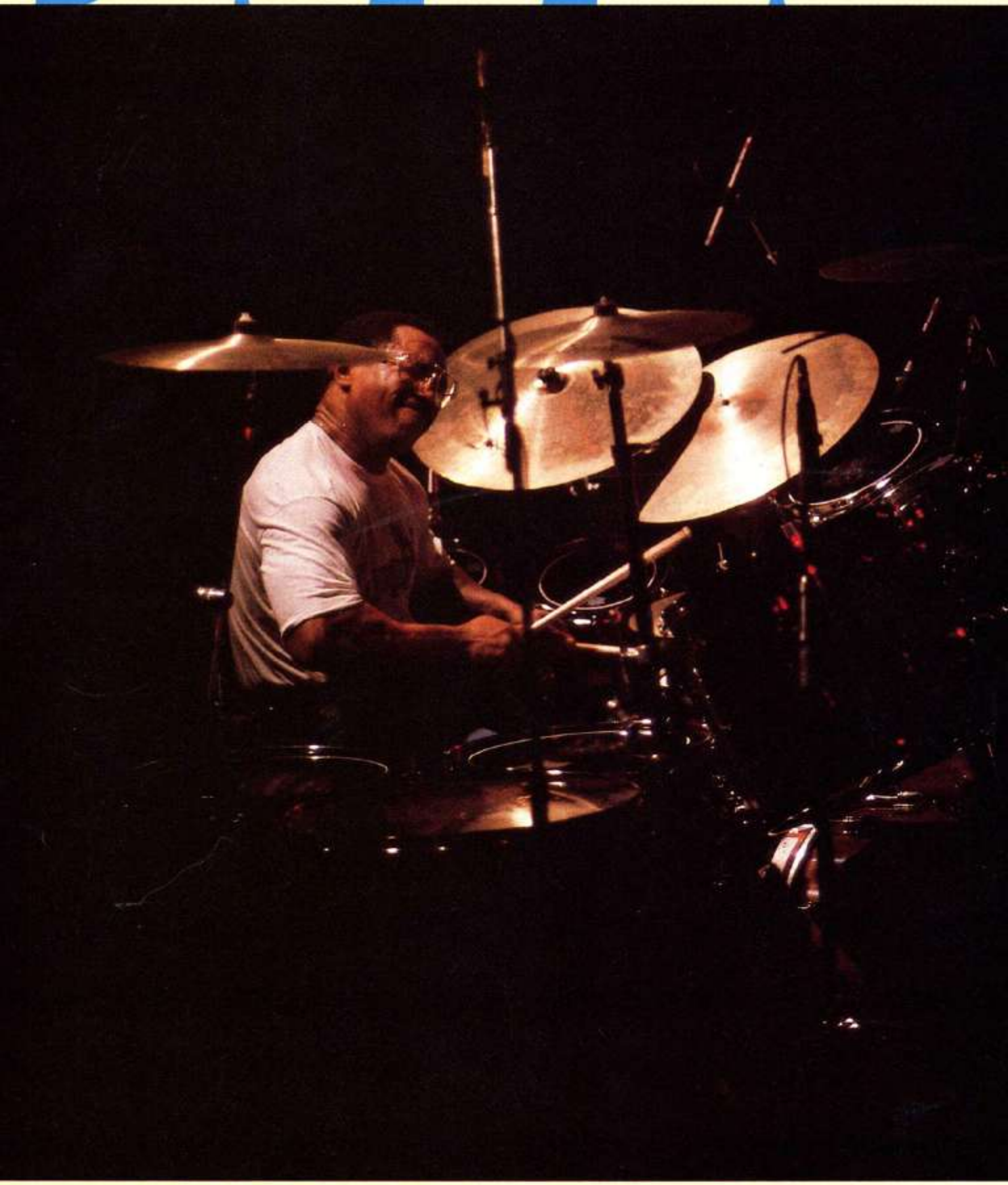
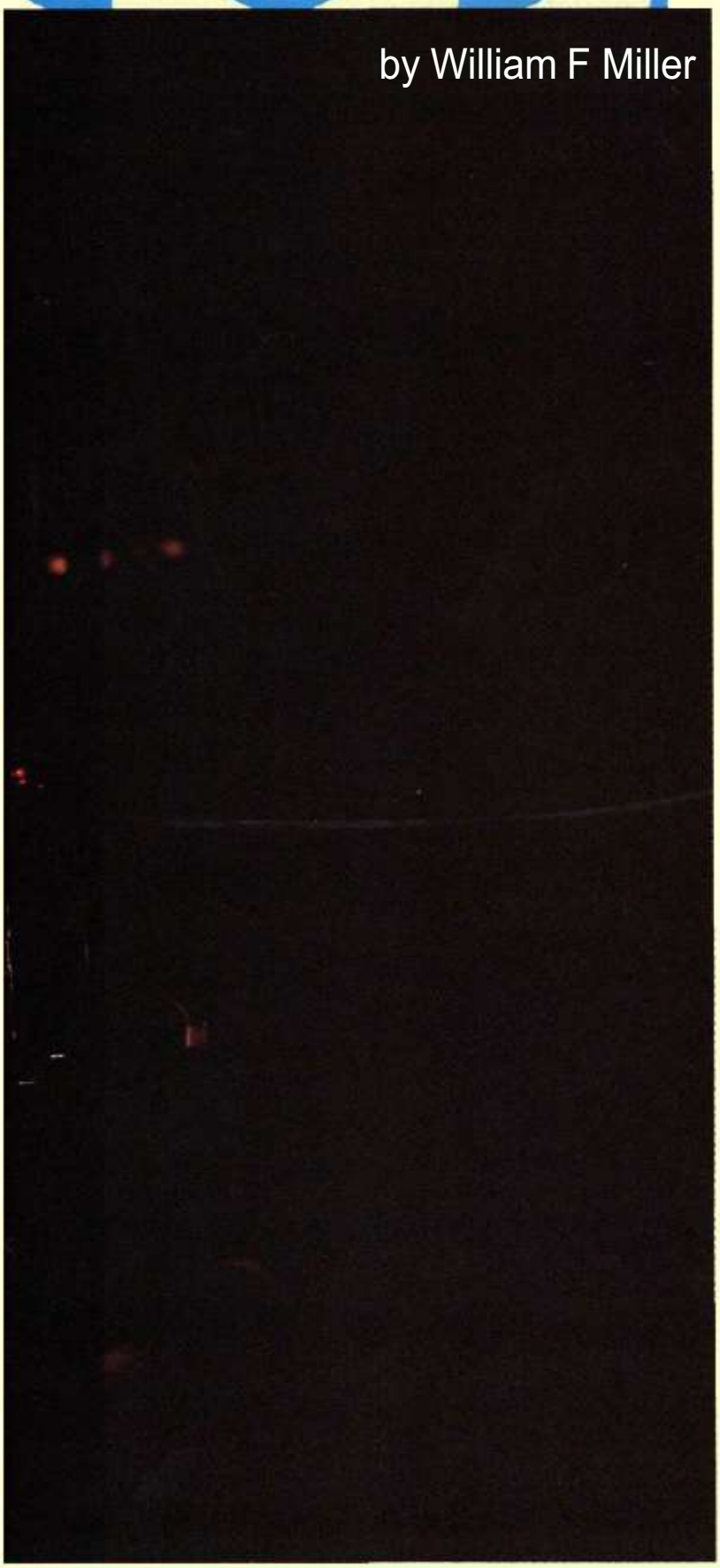


C·O·B·H·A·M

by William F Miller



ANYONE who frequents the pages of Modern Drummer *is certainly aware of his name. Pick out any issue* of MD *and read the feature interviews; there's bound to be at least one artist in any given issue who names him as a major influence. He has created new approaches and techniques for the instrument, and altered the level of drumming in many ways. He is a drummer's drummer—a musician's musician. He is Billy Cobham.*

Cobham's life has been a musical one since the start. Billy is originally from Panama. The members of his family made their livings by constructing drums and timbales, and some of Billy's earliest memories are of himself playing timbales. His father played piano, his mother sang, and his brother played trumpet. His family moved to New York when Billy was three, and by the time he was eight, he was already on stage performing with his father. From that point, Cobham's commitment to, and love for, drums became total.

Cobham became seriously involved in drum corps in his youth, and through this situation, he became aware of the rudimental approach to drumming—an approach he later mastered and expanded on. In 1959, he was accepted at Manhattan's High School Of Music And Art. After high school, Cobham joined the army. During this period, he developed his approach to the instrument, practicing long and hard. Also while in the army and stationed in Brooklyn, Billy performed all over the New York metropolitan area. This was his developmental period.

Once out of the army, Cobham began his performing career in earnest. He started getting calls from some of the biggest names in jazz, recording and / or performing with Horace Silver, George Benson, Ron Carter, Thad Jones, Curtis Fuller, Stanley Turrentine, Kenny Burrell, and a host of others. Later, Cobham formed Dreams, a jazz-rock group that performed music along the same lines as Blood, Sweat, & Tears and Chicago. The band members included the Brecker Brothers. Dreams recorded two albums for Columbia. As if all of this wasn't enough, Cobham also began recording with Miles Davis in sessions that eventually appeared on such classic albums as Jack Johnson, Live-Evil, Get Up With It, Big Fun, *and* Circle In The Round.

In the spring of 1971, Cobham was asked to join the Mahavishnu Orchestra, with guitarist John McLaughlin, bassist Rick Laird, keyboardist Jan Hammer, and violinist Jerry Goodman. This ensemble was at the forefront of fusion music, and its combination of classical virtuosity, jazz spontaneity, and sheer-rock power shook the music world. Mahavishnu's music consisted of immensely complex jazz-rock pieces, involving elements drawn from

Photo by Joost Leuen

Photo by Lissa Wales

Indian and European classical music. Cobham approached this new music with devastating technique and keen wit. His drumming brought him worldwide attention and placed him on the top of all of the major readers' and critics' polls. The Mahavishnu Orchestra recorded three landmark albums: The Inner Mounting Flame, Birds Of Fire, *and* Between Nothingness And Eternity.

Before the original Mahavishnu Orchestra disbanded, Cobham recorded his first solo album, entitled Spectrum, *which became an international hit and thrust him into the spotlight as a fine composer, as well as a drummer. Since that time, Billy has recorded many albums as both a leader and a sideman. His career has taken him all over the world, performing at concerts, clinics, and seminars. He is always coming up with new ideas and concepts for drumming, and his long list of accomplishments as a musician and entrepreneur is fantastic.*

Billy has been making his home in Switzerland for the past six years, and he divides his time between there and his base of operations in New York. Billy is now concentrating his efforts on his band, recording and touring almost constantly. The following interview was conducted during a break in the mixing of his new album, Power Play *(on GRP Records). The tracks he played for me that day contained some of that exciting, confident drumming that only Billy Cobham can dish out.*

WFM: You composed all of the tunes on the new album. What inspires your writing?

BC: The inspiration comes from the experiences that one has in life, every day, on stage and off. I've been dabbling with a lot of techniques in the electronics area with drum machines and triggering devices to use on my drums. With these electronics, I've been able to organize rhythms and pieces that have a Caribbean flavor to them—pieces that represent me and my heritage, and how I really hear music. I love the flavor of Latin percussion, so it's in my music. With the electronics, I can set things up rhythmically and be more precise in my arranging.

I like to write music that is group oriented. My music tends to go in the direction of a full-group effort, where all the musicians are playing parts that are designed specifically for certain areas in which they play. There are solos, but they are set up for X amount of bars. The solos are more like transitional sections that allow the whole band to move together as a group.

WFM: So from a writing standpoint, that's a lot more taxing on you.

BC: Yeah. The challenge is there. It's much more fun for me than just to have the head played, play a solo, maybe go to the bridge, and if you're inventive, maybe take it out.

I think that playing an involved arrangement is more exciting than just accompanying a soloist. I like doing both, but there is a challenge in performing a tight arrangement accurately. When you take a composition and perform it on the road a hundred times, you're going to get pretty tired of it, unless there's a certain amount of concentration needed to really pull it off.

WFM: How long did it take you to write all of the material for this album?

BC: I've been working on the material for this album since the fall of '85. Much of the material that made its way onto the new album consisted of tunes that my band had been performing live prior to recording. This gave me the chance to fine-tune the arrangements and to let the band get more comfortable with the material. I think that gives the album a very cohesive group sound, as opposed to just having sidemen come in and read down the charts.

Photo by Rick Malkin

WFM: How much freedom do you give to your band members in interpreting your music? Do they give you input?

BC: Oh sure, there is input, but what I try to do is set direction. It's not a free-for-all where their parts are left up to them. My parts are specific. Many times, musicians only see their own parts, and not how those parts work with the rest of the arrangement. Of course, I want everybody to be comfortable, and I am open to suggestions and criticism. I'm not perfect in my writing. I make mistakes, sure—theoretical mistakes. Some things may sound good to me that they won't hear, so I don't want to ram something down the mouths of the people I'm working with. If it's a question of a note or a chord here or there, that's no problem. There's always flexibility in that direction. When it comes to changing the whole piece or changing a major portion of my arrangement, their suggestions have to really make a lot of sense to me.

Photo by Lissa Wales

WFM: How difficult are you to work for?
BC: I don't think I'm very difficult to work for.
WFM: There are some drummers who are pretty infamous for being tough bandleaders.
BC: I don't think I fall into that category. First of all, I consider myself a musician, and therefore, I feel that my facilities far exceed and transcend just playing the drums. As a leader, I consider myself a composer and a musician, and I emphasize that I am very sensitive to all the other people in the band and what they do, because I know enough about their instruments to understand what they have to go through. I try to write to accommodate them, and since I've been a sideman on many occasions, I know where they're coming from.

My biggest problem with people is not musical. It's primarily trying to figure out how to get them to interpret my music the way I would like them to and how to get them to expand themselves. It's difficult.

WFM: What are some of the problems in leading a band?
BC: People in a band have a tendency to fall into ruts. They hear things only one way. They don't really want to change that much. The guitar player will only play guitar a certain way. It's very hard for that person to hear what I'm hearing. On some tunes, I might *be* looking for someone to sound like Eric Gale, and then on another tune, to sound like Van Halen, and then on another piece, 'o sound like Ritenour. That's asking a lot of one player. So I try to keep my mouth shut and take what I get from that individual. I try to see if I can't write in such a way as to get the guitar player to think about a certain genre of music to play inside.

On the new album, a lot of guitar synthesizer is being played. Many times, the guitar doesn't sound like a guitar. It's like a flugelhorn or trombone or a flute or something. The whole idea is, in order to play flute lines on a guitar, you have to phrase like a flute player. It makes me really think about my arrangement. It's a difficult process, but it's a learning situation. It makes everyone much more cognizant of what's going on within the musical environment at the time, and everyone develops and expands, which I feel is necessary for all players now. I can't just play drums anymore. I have to have a good, strong understanding of drum machines—how they work together with drums, and how I can utilize them as a tool and *not* be influenced by them in a negative way. It's the same thing with the other players in my band. I try to write material that will get them to think other ways and to expand their knowledge of what's available, so we have other directions that we can take in the future.

"THE PROBLEM WITH PLAYING STRAIGHT AHEAD IS THAT YOU CAN'T EARN A LIVING DOING IT."

WFM: How do you keep yourself up on all the technology, as far as guitar synthesizers and things like that go?
BC: Through the musicians that I work with and also being fortunate enough to be tied into a company like Hoshino, a full-service company that is an electronics company, too. Hoshino has a lot of stuff that I can use. The more I know about the Ibanez stuff, as well as the electronic drum gear, and the way I can use it to enhance what I do as a player, the better off I'll be. I can pass that information on through the music to the other musicians.
WFM: Talking about musicians, I want to ask you about a comment you made in a recent *down beat* interview. You said something about there being a difference between European and American musicians. Could you elaborate on that?
BC: European musicians generally are in a position not to understand our roots, because they don't live the music over here, which is absolutely important. They cannot play the music like musicians from the States can. It's just not possible. This is not something that is bad; it's just coming from a differ-

ent base. Many Europeans play with a technical facility that is unparalleled, but you just have to live here in the United States to understand what this is about. When they come over here to play, they can only emulate what's happening here. They can't really be a part of it for sure, unless they live here. Living here, you really have to put time in, pay some dues off stage, and do it. To me, music is much more than notes; it's the person playing the notes. You can tell a lot about a person by the way he or she plays.

WFM: When Europeans play, do you notice some kind of lack of feeling?

BC: Yes. In the way that we understand it, there is lack of feeling. The whole idea is that they're going to put across what they believe is soulful here, and where they lose it is that, many times, the players who have the technical facility don't put across what they are really about. The only problem I have is when they try to emulate our music. What they try to do is copy what they feel is happening here, and they fall short.

WFM: If you feel this way about European musicians, why did you move to Switzerland?

BC: So that I could emulate what they're doing there. [laughs] I needed to learn more about the European situation, so that I could actually work there more because of the difficult working situation in the United States. You can get some premium dates in the U.S., but they're so far apart from each other that it's very difficult to do.

WFM: How is your career in Europe now?

BC: Well, last spring we played 48 concerts in less than three months. The smallest house we played was 1,000 seats. Some places were over 5,000 seats. The European audience is into good music, whether it be pop or jazz. My career is going well over there.

WFM: Do you think that moving over there helped that?

BC: Sure, absolutely.

WFM: Did you work a lot when you were over there?

BC: Sure did. See, America is so big and unto itself that it is difficult to stay popular, especially performing my type of music. It's very hard to tour places other than the major markets. In Europe, there are bands that do very, very well and never come here at all. They don't have to. They make very, very good livings there, and they want to stay. They make millions there. Over here, it's just a completely different thing.

WFM: But when you went to Switzerland, didn't you risk the chance of losing your appeal or your popularity in the U.S.?

BC: I did and I lost it. There are a few people who know of me, but right now, I'm experiencing the reentry blues, man, trying to get back into the United States. I'm going through changes trying to get gigs in anything other than the major cities, but I feel that it's very, very important that I do so, because those markets are very important. If I can combine the States with my European market, which is now pretty stable, I feel that I'll be pretty happy. With the eastern sector of Europe opening up to me as well, there's no need to do more than that. I would love to build up a following in Japan also, but it's difficult and there are only so many hours in a day. You can only do so much. I want to be with my family, too.

Photo by Joost Leijen

WFM: Speaking about family, I know your family has a deep musical background.

BC: Well, I was lucky to be born into a family that loved music and respected musicians. I have been playing ever since I can remember.

WFM: So drumming was a natural thing for you?

BC: It was just something that happened. It was like, "Oh yeah, this is what we do in this family. Music is what we're about." This is what I'm doing, I guess, because it comes as a second-nature kind of thing. Since my family was so involved in music, it was a way of life for me. I think I picked up things just by being in that situation.

WFM: You're lucky. A lot of people don't have that kind of support. Besides the family situation, did you study with anyone?

BC: Well, I tried a little bit with Morris Goldenberg and then he died. Warren Smith was teaching at Music And Art High School, but I couldn't afford to study all of the time. That didn't work. I went into the United States Army after high school. I just played in drum & bugle corps and studied with people who probably wouldn't be known outside of the drum corps world. These guys were very serious. There was a guy named Bobby Thompson, who taught drum corps like Blessed Sacrament, Syracuse Raiders, and St. Catherine's Queensmen. He was involved a lot in drum corps and still is to this day.

Through drum & bugle corps, I used to pay my quarter or fifty cents a week, and I learned my needs primarily. I learned to play my rudiments properly with other people, and I attribute a lot of my growth to that period. The next major period, for me, was moving into the whole scene working with friends of mine at Music And Art High School—the high school for performing arts here in New York City—where I was extremely fortunate to work with the likes of George Cables, the jazz pianist. We were childhood friends. A lot of musicians went to school there at the same time that I went, like Bobby Columby. We're all connected somehow together in different circles now. We're peers, and we all worked against each other or off each other. We learned a lot from each other.

I learned much more from actually getting involved in musical situations than I did studying with anyone. With the drum & bugle corps, I concentrated on chops and working together with an entire section, trying to be as accurate as possible. With the different group situations at Music And Art, I learned how to listen and be musical.

WFM: When did you really start to think about getting the technical thing together?

BC: Well, the technical thing started to happen when I was in drum corps. That was my foundation. Rudiments started to happen. I feel that drummers need to know that stuff. A kid came up to me when I was in high school and said, "Do you know how to play a paradiddle?" When I first went to high school, I didn't know how to play a paradiddle. I knew how to play it, but I didn't know what it was called. He said, "Well, play one." I tried, but it didn't work. He played one, and I went home that night and worked. That little competitive thing started to happen right there. I practiced. I felt like these were things that you were supposed to know. All instruments have certain basic technical studies that have to be mastered if you are going to be a competent player. Rudiments, to me, were something that I felt were essential building blocks. I still feel that way.

After that it was, "Can you read?" In Music And Art, they couldn't afford to have a percussion teacher. So a girl who was the chief percussionist in the senior orchestra was assigned to teach me how to read music when I was a sophomore. She taught me how to read drum music.

WFM: When did you take all this technical ability—this rudimental ability from drum corps—and apply it to the set? When did all this start to happen?

BC: Right in Music And Art.

WFM: On the set?

BC: Yeah, on the set. I was playing set before Music And Art, as a matter of fact, but not really very seriously. It was the kind of situation where my interests in drumming grew, and I was basically drawn to the set. When I was very young though, I'd play dates with my father—you know, brushes.

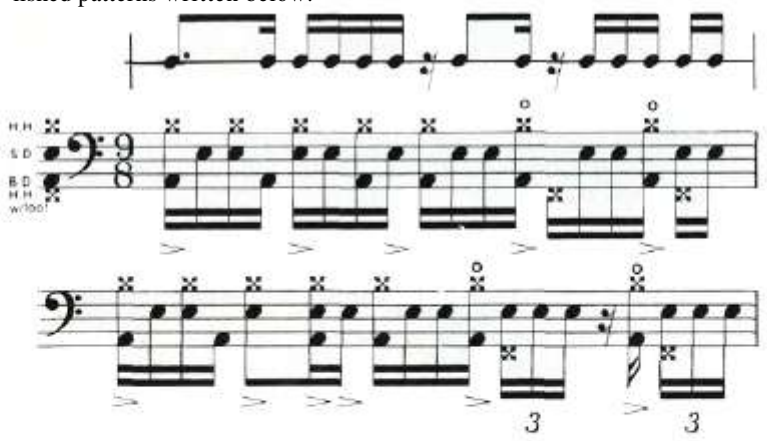
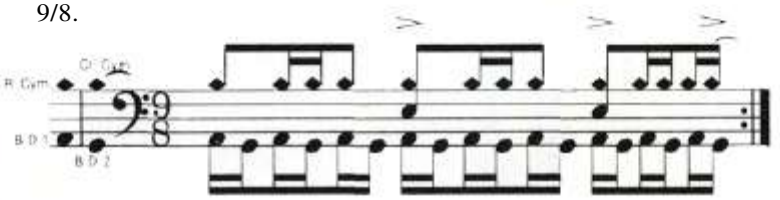
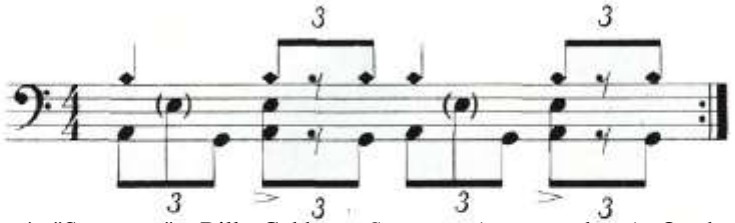
WFM: Your dad's a piano player?

COBHAM ON RECORD

by William F. Miller

Without a doubt, Billy Cobham is one of the most influential drummers in the history of the instrument. His technical ability on the drums is unparalleled. His drumming combines this blazing technique with a thoughtful and innovative approach to the instrument.

The following examples demonstrate some of Billy's mastery of odd-time signatures, double bass drum technique, and heavy groove playing. The transcriptions shown are the basic beats that Billy embellishes on. If you are not familiar with these tunes, be sure to check them out. They represent an important part of drum history.

1. "Vital Transformation"—The Mahavishnu Orchestra; *The Inner Mounting Flame,* Columbia PC 31607, recorded 1972. This is one of the more famous fusion compositions, from the Mahavishnu Orchestra's debut album. What appears below is the basic pattern in 9/8, the rhythm of the basic riff written above that pattern, and one of the many embellished patterns written below.

2. "Birds Of Fire"—The Mahavishnu Orchestra; *Birds Of Fire,* Columbia 31996, recorded 1973. The title cut of the Mahavishnu Orchestra's second album features Billy playing a driving double-bass pattern in 9/8.

3. "Quadrant 4"—Billy Cobham; *Spectrum,* Atlantic SD 7268, recorded 1973. On this cut from his first solo album, Billy plays the double-bass shuffle, years before people like Rod Morgenstein, Simon Phillips, and Alex Van Halen became known for it.

4. "Spectrum"—Billy Cobham; *Spectrum* (same as above). On the title track from this album, Billy plays a heavy groove in 7/8.

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TICO TORRES

by Teri Saccone

CHALLENGES

WHEN Tico Torres relates his experiences in music, he's talking about his life, and it's clear that the two are one and the same. "I've definitely got drums in my blood. I've got rhythm, " comments Tico. "It comes from in here," he explains, pointing to his heart.

Affectionately dubbed "The Hit Man"—courtesy of his associates in Bon Jovi—Tico describes the group as a "pretty straightforward rock band—-hard rock, but very melodic." No doubt about it, Bon Jovi has been steadily growing into a majorforce in rock, ever since the band's '83 debut release Bon Jovi *(spawning the hit "Runaway"). The follow-up,* 7800° Fahrenheit *(the temperature at which rock melts at the center of the earth), has produced two big singles as well: "In And Out Of Love" and "Silent Night."*

"The Hit Man " himself has certainly become more visible being a member of Bon Jovi for the past three years, but he's also enjoyed success away from the limelight, attaining a reputation as a highly regarded session musician, and as an accomplished jazz drummer playing the proverbial smoke-filled jazz clubs of the circuit.

Tico's manner is low-key, his appearance striking, and his voice deep—contributing to a rather commanding presence. All the same, he's one of the warmest and most gracious individuals I've had the privilege to interview. Tico Torres—a deeply devoted drummer and *musician.*

TS: I heard that you had a pretty unusual start as a drummer, as far as your first gig was concerned.

TT: Well, I used to hang out with a lot of soul bands. One in particular was a group called Cold Sweat. One night when the group was about to tape a television show called *Hullabaloo,* the drummer had to run out to get some new sticks. When air time came around and the drummer hadn't made it back, the band members asked me to fill in for him on a couple of numbers. So I went up there and played a couple of James Brown songs with half a drumstick and a pair of pliers. That was my first live gig behind a kit. I had always fooled around with other people's drums—I always jumped behind a kit whenever I could—but that was the first time I played drums in any kind of formal situation. Right after that, I went out and borrowed an old Slingerland kit, started a three-piece blues-oriented rock band, and just went from there.

TS: So what or who were you sounding like back then?

TT: I was sounding like a terrible drummer. [laughs] In those days, I guess my big influence was Mitch Mitchell, but that was also my initial exposure to jazz. I first got interested in jazz when I got into records by a New Jersey trumpet player by the name of Dave Burns. Then I started listening to John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, Sonny Rollins, and through them, I began to love the sounds of jazz drummers like Elvin Jones and Philly Joe Jones. My jazz record collection grew from there. Jazz really grabbed me, because that style of music was based totally on creativity.

I started learning a lot, playing with just about everybody that I could. I was always on the road playing with tons of bands, and I had been doing showcases since I was 16.I wanted to learn as much as I could, so I approached Elvin Jones and asked him what the best way to learn was. He said, "Come down to the club and watch me. I'm playing at the Vanguard six nights this week." So I went down there and handed him gin and tonics, and Kool cigarettes that night. I just sat next to him and watched him. I was this little guy with long hair who was trying to soak in everything I could from his playing. I was very impressionable, and I remember being blown away by his amazing ability to play as hard or as soft as the situation called for.

TS: You said that you were on the road and doing showcases since you were 16. What followed?

TT: Well, I started to do a lot of studio work, so I learned to sight read. I was doing a lot of commercials—everything from Chicken Delight jingles to Kodak spots, even tracks for movie scores. It was great doing 20-second spots with tons of percussion, congas, and vibes. But reading is really essential to doing studio work. The hard thing about it for me is that I love touring—I practically live on the road—and sight-reading is like a language: If you don't use it enough, you start to lose it. So I constantly have to brush up. I'm not a great sight reader. I'm more of an ear player, and I have to work at it to keep it.

At one point, I did check out Berklee, but I found that it wasn't drum-oriented enough. It was mainly for guitar and keyboards. Anyway, I made demos and singles with lots of local bands, and I'd play with whoever I could, in whatever musical situation I could hook up with. I jammed with Miroslav Vitous when he was still in Weather Report, and I worked the club scene where I was jamming with anybody who'd walk into the place—from Gladys Knight to Alex Blake. I played in top-40 bands, lounge bands, and original bands. You could always find me in a club. I'd play the clubs up in Harlem—the higher numbers like 164th Street—where some amazing musicians would walk in. Sometimes, I'd be the only white guy in the place, but they'd just say "Tico, get in and play." It was great.

My advice to young drummers corning up is to check out playing with as many people as you can. Go out and do the kind of gigs that will stretch your playing. You don't like country music? Try it once to see what it feels like, and see if you really don't like it. Instead of always going to a Ratt/Bon Jovi-type concert, check out places like the Vanguard in New York, a jazz or an R&B club, or maybe a dance club to hear some dance music. Getting that diversification is only going to help you broaden yourself.

I find that a lot of young drummers close themselves off from anything beyond the realm of rock, largely because of the way they were brought up. I was brought up in an environment where I had a broad amount of influences—musically and culturally—all around me. For example, I never even knew there was such a thing as prejudice until kids in my neighborhood told me about it. Their parents taught it to them. We didn't have any kind of prejudices in my house. To me, there's no color—no prejudice—in music. It doesn't matter *who* you're playing with. It's the *music* and the experience that matter.

TS: During the early part of your career, did you ever rely on work outside of music to supplement your income?

TT: Oh yeah, I had been an upholsterer since I was 12.

TS: Wasn't that an early age to start doing upholstery?

TT: Well, I got tired of delivering papers.

TS: [laughs] Right, and the obvious career move was to go into upholstering.

TT: [laughs] You see, my neighbors had an upholstery business, and I used to deliver papers to them. One day, they asked me if I wanted to go to work for them, so I started out as an apprentice, and then I eventually became an upholsterer. I had always liked to work with wood, and this gave me the chance to do that. I worked on some really crazy-looking chairs. I did that until I was about 17. Since I had started playing in night clubs when I was 16, I'd always made a decent living from both the music and my day job. Right after high school, I started doing roofing, which I ended up doing for six years. I even became a supervisor.

TS: It must have been difficult having a strenuous day job, as well as playing just about every night.

TT: Well when I turned 17,I decided that I wanted to move out. I wanted to see the world—spread my wings. I never stopped playing

Photo by Michael S. Jachles

gigs. I just treated roofing or any other job as a hobby, and treated music as a business. That kept my head straight, so that working a day job didn't get me down. Working helped me get the money for a car, which in turn, gave me the transportation to get around to gigs. It also gave me the chance to afford better equipment. I also had the opportunity to play the kind of music that I wanted to play, which sometimes didn't pay that well. There were times when I was playing jazz clubs for $25 a night, and you can't live off $25 a night and free drinks. [laughs] But I learned a lot from those bands, and I enjoyed it.

I also did a little bit of teaching—for about a year. I had studied with Joe Morello. In fact, I repaired his studio roof as payment for some lessons. When I studied with Joe for a couple of months, I remember that he was called to go out on the road. So when I was teaching—I had about six students at the time—I found it hard when I had to go out on the road. I didn't think it was fair to the students, because it was hard on me when I was studying with Joe and he had to leave.

Kids would come in for a class, and the first thing they'd say to me would be something like, "How does Alex Van Halen play this riff?" I figured that the best way to command their respect would be to get their attention, so I'd show them how to do the riff. From then on, I'd have "open ears" from them, and they'd think, "Well, this guy's cool. He can do it." Then I'd open them up to different styles. I'd let them know that heavy metal was not the only music in town. Like I said, listening and playing different kinds of music is definitely going to affect the way you play. Even if you do play, say, heavy metal, you'll begin to throw in an extra flair here or there, which will set you apart from the basic heavy metal drummer. Some kids grow up wanting to be nothing but heavy metal drummers, and that's okay. But if they broaden their musical horizons, they'll find that there are a lot of amazing avenues of music that they can find useful, and that there are many more rhythms available to them than just the standard metal stock riffs. There are a lot of stock riffs out there and a lot of stock drum solos.

For instance, when Ginger Baker came on the scene, a lot of drummers—and you can't blame them—copied Baker's style. He was very innovative at the time. Cream was a huge band, and because of Baker, the double bass was brought to the forefront quite a bit. Eventually, people began to realize that Louis Bellson had been using multiple bass drums for years, playing the single-note riff with the bass drum, weaving in and out. And even today, audiences still love that.

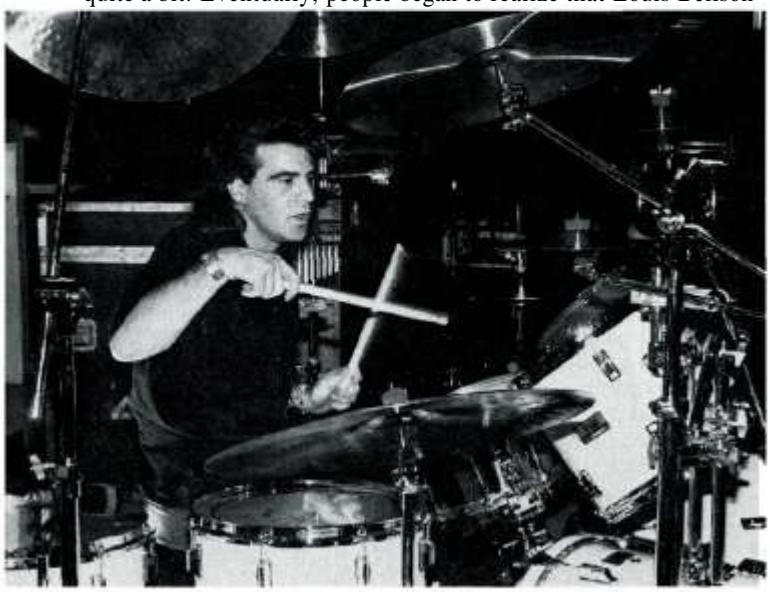

Photo by Michael S. Jachles

Now I prefer to play some off-times in between that, and even if I do jump into that, I'll jump in and then move out of it. I like to weave time signatures *and feelings* into my solo, instead of building it up so that it's obvious where I'm going with it. I go for the element of surprise in a solo without losing the spirit of the song or the attention of the audience. That's where versatility really helps you and would be helpful to kids coming up.

TS: So spontaneity seems to be the key to your soloing.

TT: Definitely, because when you don't have it worked out ahead of time, you have to totally rely on your creative instincts. It's sort of dangerous, too, because you run the risk that it just might end up being a lousy solo. However, you also might hear the tape of it later on and say, "I can't believe I did that," because it turns out to be great.

TS: You just randomly throw in riffs that you think might work?

TT: There are always little tricks in the back of your head, and when they cross your mind, you jump on them and stick them in there. I like musical solos. I also like to make a solo a song in a segue. You start out with a song, create a solo, and bring that into another song. The whole thing becomes a total musical segue, and the music hasn't stopped for three songs, the second "song" being your solo.

Some nights, I'll start out with a Latin beat, which is something kids are not used to hearing at a rock show. It's a different little twist. You should always come out of your solo in a semi-regular way, so that the band knows where you're at. Overall, I think that, when it's your time to solo, you *go* for it. Just try not to solo in between songs on your own. [laughs] Don't overplay, but when there is a little part in a song that's yours, go for it.

TS: You spoke earlier about playing jazz on the club circuit several years ago. How involved were you with jazz music?

TT: I played jazz heavily for two years. It's hard, hard work. You work a lot, and when you make a commitment to it, you work constantly. When you're working with jazz artists, you do a lot of records, too. You have to keep pumping with jazz. A rock band will do about one record a year, but a jazz artist will do between two and three records a year, as well as being involved in projects with other people. You really have to stick with it and be serious about the commitment. It doesn't offer the mega-bucks that rock 'n' roll does, but the experience is invaluable.

At one point, I had this little jazz combo, and our keyboard player's uncle was Joe Pass. One night when we were playing at a club, we saw this head sticking out of the doorway, just watching us. The head belonged to Joe, who later sat down, plugged in, and played with us for almost an hour. I tell you, that was like a year's worth of music lessons. With that caliber of a musician playing with you, it gives you ideas. It opens up a whole new spectrum to you because, well, there's the saying: "You're as good as the band you're playing with," and the better the musicians are that you're playing with, the more you will learn. I had always played with guys who were older than I was, even when I was 15 or 16 years old, and man, I was like a sponge. I still am. Every band I played with gave me a new incentive to go into a totally different direction than the one before it.

TS: Frankie & The Knockouts enjoyed some success when the group was together a few years ago. How did you become involved with that group?

TT: I was asked to audition for the Knockouts through a recommendation, and the day I went down there, there were a ton of drummers. I just sat down and played. I broke the snare and the hi-

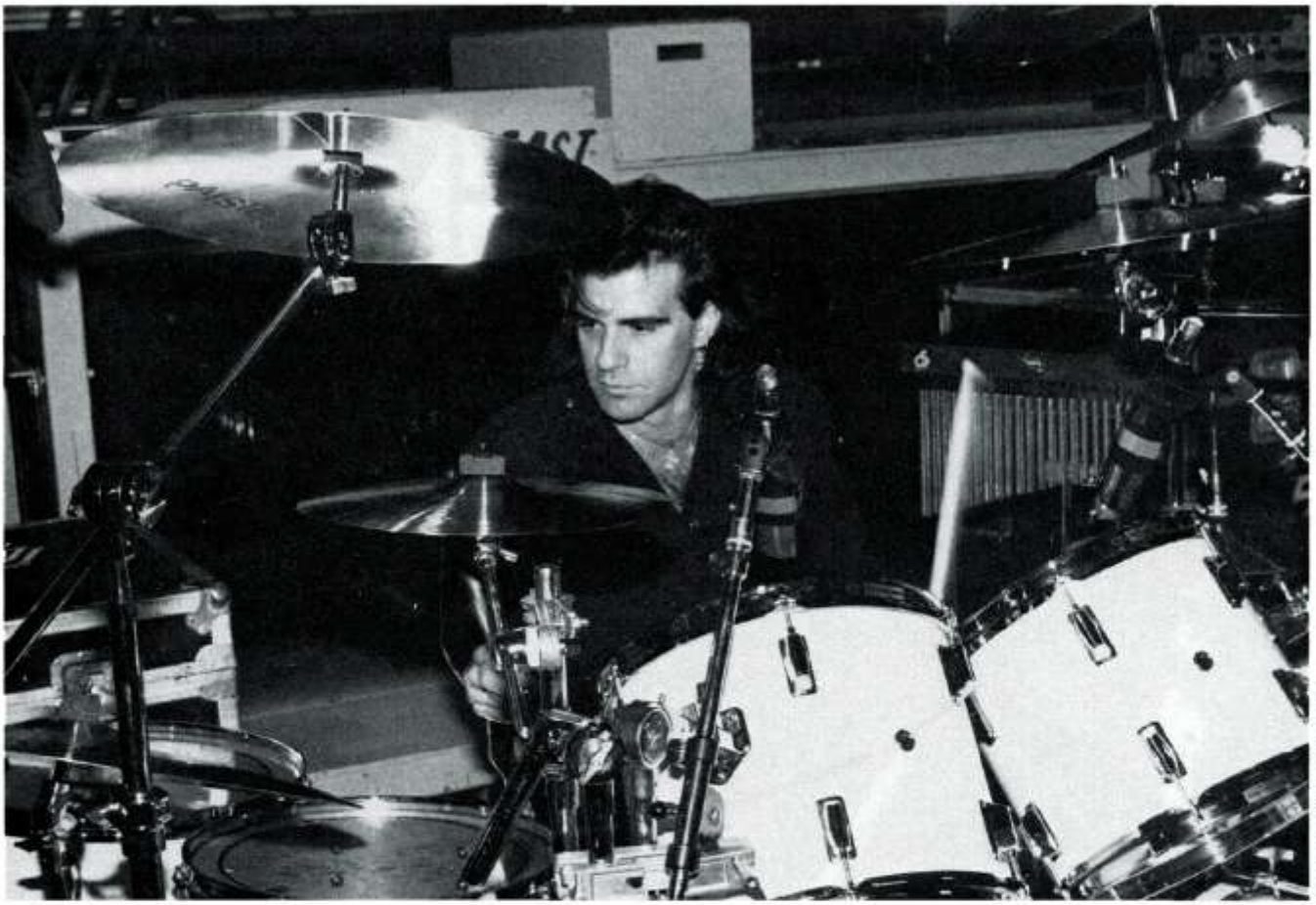

Photo by Michael S. Jachles

hat in the process—just tore them up. Afterwards I said, "Well, thanks guys," and left. Two days later, Frankie called me and said, "Are you ready to go to Florida? We need you down there in a week and a half." Since I was heavily involved with studio work at the time, I had previous commitments that I had to take care of first. I've always believed that, when I make a commitment to *anything,* I should see it through, and I always finish what I started out to do. That's really important to me. When I got that offer, those were the days when I usually worked sessions from 8:00 A.M. until 8:00 P.M., running all over town with a trap case. Eventually, I left all that to go on the road with Frankie. The band stayed together for about two and a half years. We definitely had a strong R&B flavor. We even had two keyboard players. I brought in our guitar player—Bobby Messano—who I'd done commercials, sessions, and demos with. We had almost become a "package deal," where both of us would be called for the same jobs together. I got to return some of the favors that he'd done for me when I asked him to join the Knockouts. Most of the other guys in the band were from Jersey, which is a great breeding ground for musicians. The club scene there is so strong.

After our third record, the band broke up, because we were having problems with our new record label. We had just come off a strong tour opening for Toto, and we had been signed to a new label, but there were just too many differences between the band and the label. It was right around that time when Jon Bon Jovi called me and asked me to join his band.

TS: Bon Jovi hadn't been signed at that point, right?
TT: No. Jon hadn't gotten a deal yet.
TS: What persuaded you to take the plunge, then?
TT: Actually, it was Alec, our bass player. He had been in the band that I played my first gig with—Cold Sweat. He had called me up and said, "Come down and check it out," so I did. Since the Knockouts were over, I decided to give this a shot, because at the very least, it was a chance to play.

The band started to click together pretty quickly. We started doing showcases together around the City. Then, we played with Eddie Money, following him around in our station wagon. We finally got a deal. It came down to two record companies wanting

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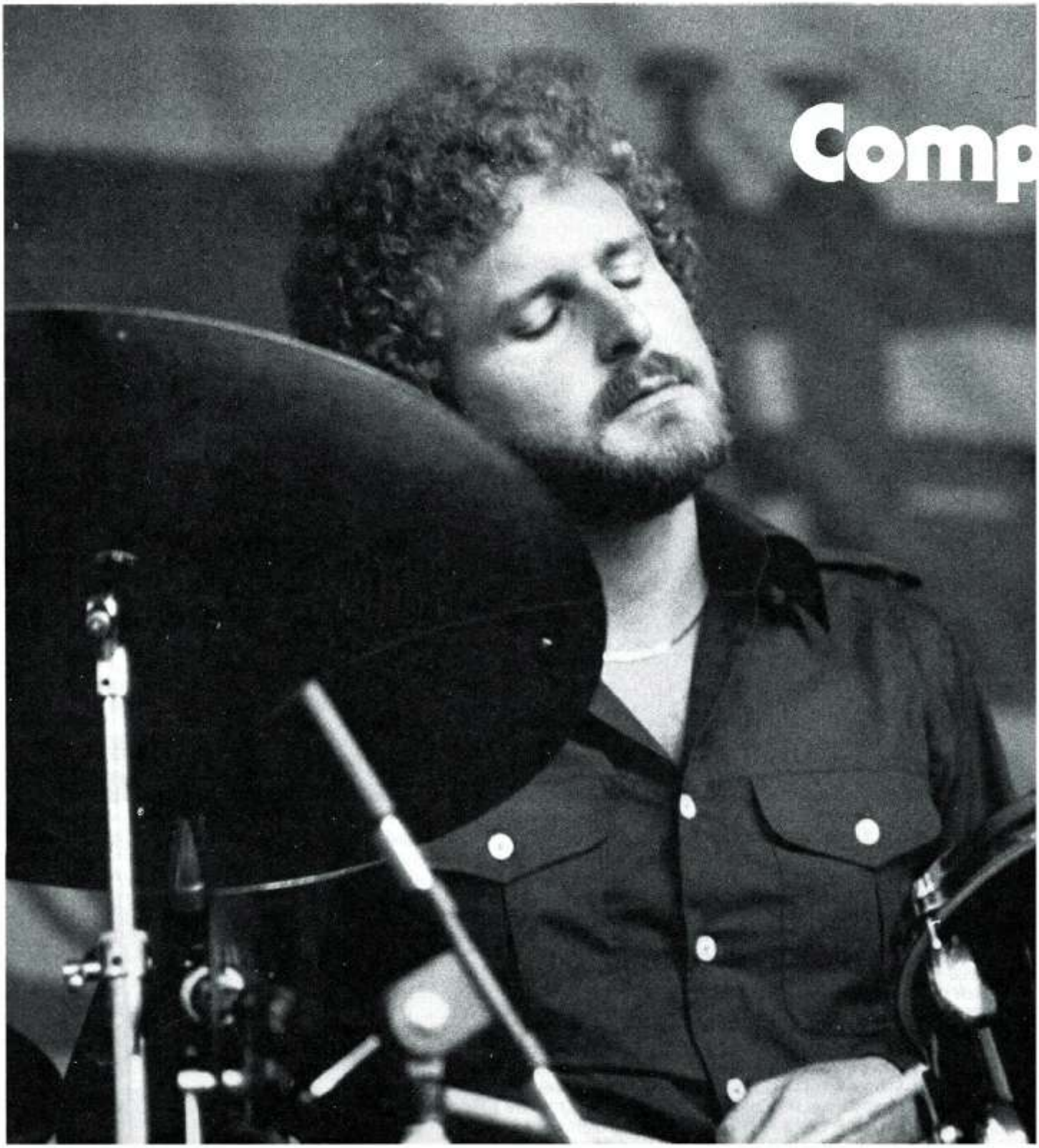
Photo by Michael S. Jachles



by Robyn Flans

JEFF Hamilton knows that he's lucky. Either as a band member or a sub, he's worked in such coveted situations as the Woody Herman big band, the Monty Alexander trio, the Count Basie Orchestra (in November, 1984, after Basie's death), and the L.A. 4. He's even led his own band, which recorded its own album. He's one of the fortunate few. Most jazz musicians complain that they can't make a living playing the music they love, so they are forced to play something else. For Jeff, jazz is the only *kind of music he's had to play* or will *play.*

A friend of mine described Jeff as a no-nonsense player, a straight shooter as a person, and an individual with strong confidence. That is an accurate description. He gives the music the kick in the butt it needs, laying back when necessary and being aggressive when called for. He knows what he wants, and goes after it with confidence and self-assurance. He's one of the few who is totally satisfied with his career, wouldn't change a thing, and

jeff HAMILTON

Photo by Tom Copi

has never been in the position to have to compromise his dreams. He set his goals and has spent his life attaining them.

RF: Most of the people who want to play the kind of music you play don't get to, while it seems that almost everyone was brought up on it.

JH: I think people my age, in their '30s, did grow up with a lot of music that their parents introduced them to, like the big bands. A lot of the younger players were not so much brought up with it, though. Some of them are just finding the truth of jazz—the honesty that is in jazz—and they're starting to come over towards that direction. I seriously believe that, if you are dedicated and have a desire to do something, whatever it is, you can do it. You have to have your playing together. You have to feel good about what you do and confident about what you do by being honest with yourself, before anyone else can hear that honesty and sincerity in your playing.

RF: But realistically are there gigs available?

JH: They may not be on the scale that you want them to be. You may not get to play with Wynton Marsalis right out of college, but there are steps you can take to get to that goal. For instance, my own experience was that, when I was 18,I met John Clayton, a bass player I went to school with at Indiana University, who has been very helpful and my best friend. He was a Ray Brown student at the time. We hooked up and he liked the way I played, so I said, "What am I doing wrong? I know it's not all that comfortable for you, but I'm having a ball playing with you. What do I need to do?" He said, "Your time is not steady. You need to listen to some people who play good time feels, like Philly Joe Jones." He asked me who I listened to, and the people I was listening to at the time were pretty good time players. I would listen to drum solos, though, and not really pay attention to the time that was going on. He asked me to name three bands I wanted to play with. I said, "Woody Herman's big band, the Count Basie Orchestra, and the Oscar Peterson Trio." He said, "Okay, you will play with all three of those groups—or at least one of them—if you really want to do it."I said, "Yeah, right!"

I ended up playing with Woody Herman and Count Basie. I also played with Ray Brown and am very good friends with Ed Thigpen, who were part of the Oscar Peterson Trio. I met Oscar, and he was very kind to me. I had an offer to do a week with them in Detroit in 1978, but I was in Japan with the L.A. 4. At least the opportunity was there. That's what I'm talking about. If you're dedicated enough and do all the homework, you can do it. I knew what Don Lamond did on Woody's band in the '40s, I knew what Dave Tough did, and I understood why they did it. I really got into the research of the projects at hand. I had to do that with the Basie band, too. You have to do the research on anyone you want to play with.

RF: You mentioned that you can take steps to get these gigs. Can you be more specific? You also mentioned that you have to get your playing together, and I want to know how you got yours together. That's certainly one of the steps.

JH: They go hand in hand. You have to go with what you like in any field—rock 'n' roll, jazz, country & western. Pick your favorites, find out what they do, and play to the records. Don't just sit down and play what you want to play. Be able to play *exactly* what they play: Transcribe the solos, transcribe the time that they're playing and learn the little things they do with their left hands. Ask yourself, "What triggers what they do? Did the bass player do something that triggers them to answer or respond?" This involves years of work that you have to sit down and do. There's an entire Thad Jones/Mel Lewis record that I know by heart. I know everybody's solos, and I can sing Richard Davis's bass lines through the whole album. This shouldn't be rare. All drummers should be able to do that with the albums that are their favorites. Mel played so great on that album; I wanted to latch onto it and get his groove. I was able to do that. You have to know all different situations, like Philly Joe Jones in a small group, Max Roach in a small group, Mel Lewis in a small group or big band, and Shelly Manne with a trio or a big band. You've got to know why they played the way they did in certain settings. That's the homework that you have to do.

RF: Did you have any formal training during all of this?

JH: Yes, but I didn't learn how to play jazz through formal training. I learned how to

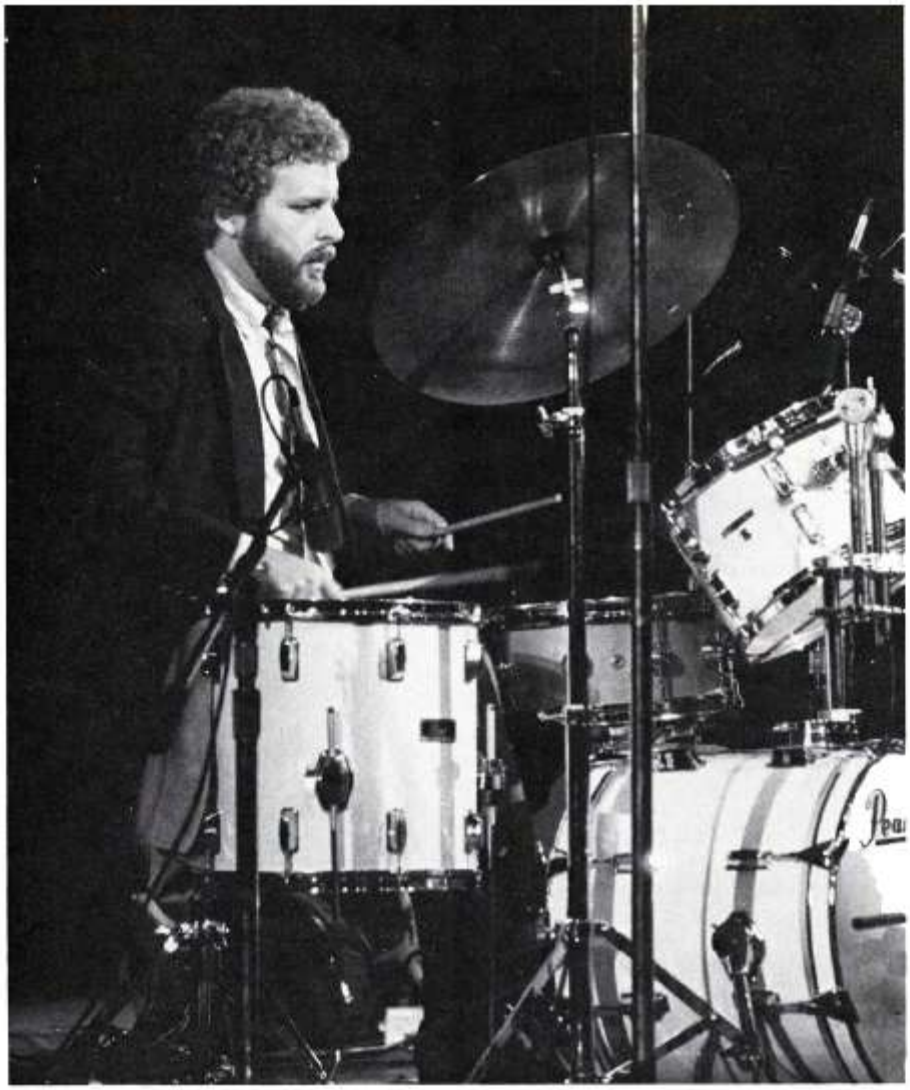


Photo by Tom Copi

play jazz through listening and playing to records.

RF: Then what was the formal training for, and was it beneficial?

JH: I started on piano when I was five and went to snare drum when I was eight. I didn't get a drumset for five years. I was just working with snare drum on getting my hands to be machine-like almost. Finally, when I got my drumset, I was this little mechanical figure: You wind him up, and he can play all 26 rudiments without batting an eye. I then transferred all that technique to the drumset, a la Buddy Rich and Louie Bellson, which was the typical transition from the snare drum to the drumset. I studied marimba and all the percussion instruments, including timpani. I went to Indiana University, and I think they wanted me to be a classical percussionist. We had quite a crew while I was there: Kenny Aronoff, Peter Erskine, and I were freshman together there, along with David Derge and Bill Molenhof. Peter left after his first year to go with the Kenton band, and I left after my second year to join the newly organized Tommy Dorsey Band run by Murray McEachern. That was the end of my formal training, but I learned so much from the technical aspect. The timpani grip I used in school is basically the same grip I use on the ride cymbal with my right hand, and I still play traditional grip. It all ties together. The stroke you use for hitting marimba can be applied to the drumset—how to pull the tone out of the bar or the drum. The more technical training you get, the more it's going to help you play.

RF: You said that your formal training didn't teach you to play jazz. Can you be more specific about that?

JH: I'm opposed to institutions teaching jazz drummers to play. Horn players and melodic instruments are another story. They can be taught improvisation patterns and techniques that are going to help them. For drummers, I think it's like learning a trade as a blacksmith or cobbler. I think that's the best approach to learning how to play jazz. Find someone who touches you as a player and try to study with that person or with five or six people, because you may not always be able to study with Tony Williams or Elvin Jones. You have to be an apprentice, in that you have to be at every gig with them, you have to know everything they do when they do it, and you have to know what causes them to do it.

RF: You have students, but if you don't believe you can actually teach someone to play jazz . . .

JH: I said *institutions.* What happens is that they get caught up in the whole program of the percussion school where students have to play everything instead of just jazz drumming.

RF: But you just said that marimba and timpani really helped you.

JH: It did help, but I think I would still be a good jazz drummer without that. Looking back and thinking about what I got from it, that was it, but it wasn't the important thing about playing jazz. Listening is the important thing about playing jazz. Listening to all kinds of music and to jazz records is how you really form your own style. My students are serving more or less an apprenticeship. One student of mine has been on Woody Herman's band already. I've got a couple who are ready to go on when there's an opening. The students show up at the jobs, because they're interested and want to learn how I handle each situation. Somebody kicks off a tempo that they think is going to be too fast. "Uh oh, what would I do here?" Then, they see what happens. I think that's the best way to learn to play jazz drums—to get with someone who can show you the trade.

My cobbler, or guru, was John Von Ohlen. He was in Indianapolis at the time, so I left Indiana University after two years to study with him just before I went on the Dorsey Band. I was with him for eight months. In that time, he showed me how to treat a big band, how to read, and what to leave out, and a lot of little nuances and subtleties.

RF: Can you be more specific about those things?

JH: For instance, John stressed the point that most people try to read too much. They see all these notes on the part, and they try to play all of them. What we don't remember is that the rest of the band members know how to play their parts, so we don't have to play their parts for them. We're there to lay the foundation for the horns to build a house over the rhythm section. So if there's a group of four 8th notes, catch the first and the last one; otherwise, it comes out sounding like a typewriter. It's phrasing. He said to think like a lead trumpet player when you're playing big band. It's true. I sing the parts mentally, and sometimes orally too, catching what the horn players would be catching, accenting what they would be accenting, and phrasing the same way. Leave out a whole bunch of things. Jake Hanna said to me once, "There's only one important part of an arrangement that you need to lay for, and the rest of the time, just play time. There's one peak in each arrangement, so lay for it." There's a lot to be said for that. That's really cutting out all the extra frills. That's not for every arrangement either, but in all the old big band arrangements, there was one shout chorus where you nailed everything, and the rest

Photo by Tom Copi

Photo by Lissa Wales

of the time you played time.

The other thing John stressed was time. His stroke is one I applied to my own playing, which is just bringing the stick back, dropping it on the cymbal, and getting three bounces. You're getting a natural accent on TWO-a-three, FOUR-a-one, and you're getting your 2 and 4, which is where you snap your fingers anyway, if you're listening to jazz. That's the stroke that I'm using, although naturally, I do some things differently with it than he does. I have to be completely relaxed in order to play, and it's not hard to get relaxed with this stroke, because it won't work, otherwise. I feel comfortable and relaxed, my posture is good, I'm sitting up straight and I'm letting my body breathe. The chest and upper torso are the furnace, and that's keeping all the energy going. A lot of drummers slouch; I feel that they're really hurting themselves physically and musically. I won't mention names, but some of the older drummers have developed back and neck problems, and can't play as easily or freely as they used to. Posture is an important factor. I used to have back problems all the time because I did slouch, until John straightened me out.

RF: Earlier you were saying that, when you listen to records, make sure you play what you're hearing and not what you want to play. Taking that further, how do you make it your own, and develop your own technique and style?

JH: I feel that, by listening to all of your favorite drummers and even exposing yourself to ones who are not your favorites, you are naturally developing your own style. Art Blakey will do something with a rimshot that nobody else can do. Max will do things in solos that nobody else can do. Shelly will do the same thing with brushes. So you take Shelly Manne's brushes, Blakey's time feel, Philly Joe's fours, and Max's extended solos and that becomes you. Even though you're playing what these people are playing, you're learning what they're doing in a situation. As you're listening to the records, transcribe what they're doing, because then you're hearing it and you're looking at it at the same time. A lot of times, if you transcribe and pull it out a year later, it'll sound dumb because you're just looking at a piece of paper. But if you look at the transcription while listening to the record, it all starts making sense. What looked like four 16th notes that were put in the wrong place for no reason at all suddenly becomes important, because you're hearing it. The two together are very important.

Another reason for transcribing is that sometimes the ear isn't accurate enough to pick up whether it was on the "e" or the "a" of 1 or 2, so listening to it over and over again and trying to decide if it is "e" or "a" strengthens your ear. After you've gone through the steps of trying to play what they play for a few months, then you go through it and play what *you* want to play. You think, "How would I do this in this situation? Well, he did this and the trumpet players needs this behind him, so I'm going to do this." A lot of times you experiment with those bands just by playing with the records and seeing if it will work or not. That way you start getting your own style, I think. The thing about playing with records is that we don't get to play with Oscar Peterson and Woody Herman when we're young, so the next best thing is playing with the record.

RF: Back to you. At 19, you took off. What happened from there?

JH: I went out to audition for the Dorsey Band in Kansas City with a suitcase and a set of drums. I got the job, and I was the youngest guy in the band at the time. I had 15 fathers, which was good. I didn't mind it at all. I spent eight months on the band, and then a friend of mine, Dennis Wilson, who was on the Lionel Hampton Band, subbed for our lead trombone player. He liked the way I played, so he got me on Lionel Hampton's band in early '75. That only lasted three months because, at that time, Lionel was doing a show on Broadway with Bette Midler called *Clams On The Half Shell,* using her rhythm section and New York local musicians only. I couldn't do it, so therefore, I was out of work. I went back to my parents' house in Indiana for about a month and a half, and got back on the Dorsey Band. Two weeks after I was on it, John Clayton called and said that Monty Alexander, the piano player, was hiring him and needed a drummer as well.

I joined Monty in June of '75 and was with him for two years. We played the Montreaux Jazz Festival, and I did my first recording with Monty at the festival, live. We had to follow the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Big Band, and the Stan Getz Quartet with Billy Hart on drums followed us. I was shaking. It was sink or swim, but I had enough confidence in me to go out, and we just stomped all over it. I was with Monty until about July of '77, at which time Birch Johnson, the lead trombone player I was on the Tommy Dorsey Band with, was playing lead with Woody Herman. He recommended me for the band. I was ready for a change at the time, so I went on Woody's band in July of '77 until December of '77. I had met Ray Brown from playing with Milt Jackson and Monty Alexander at the old Lighthouse, and apparently, Ray liked something about my playing. I called him to say hello while we were playing Disneyland, and he said, "I'm on my way out the door, but I've got

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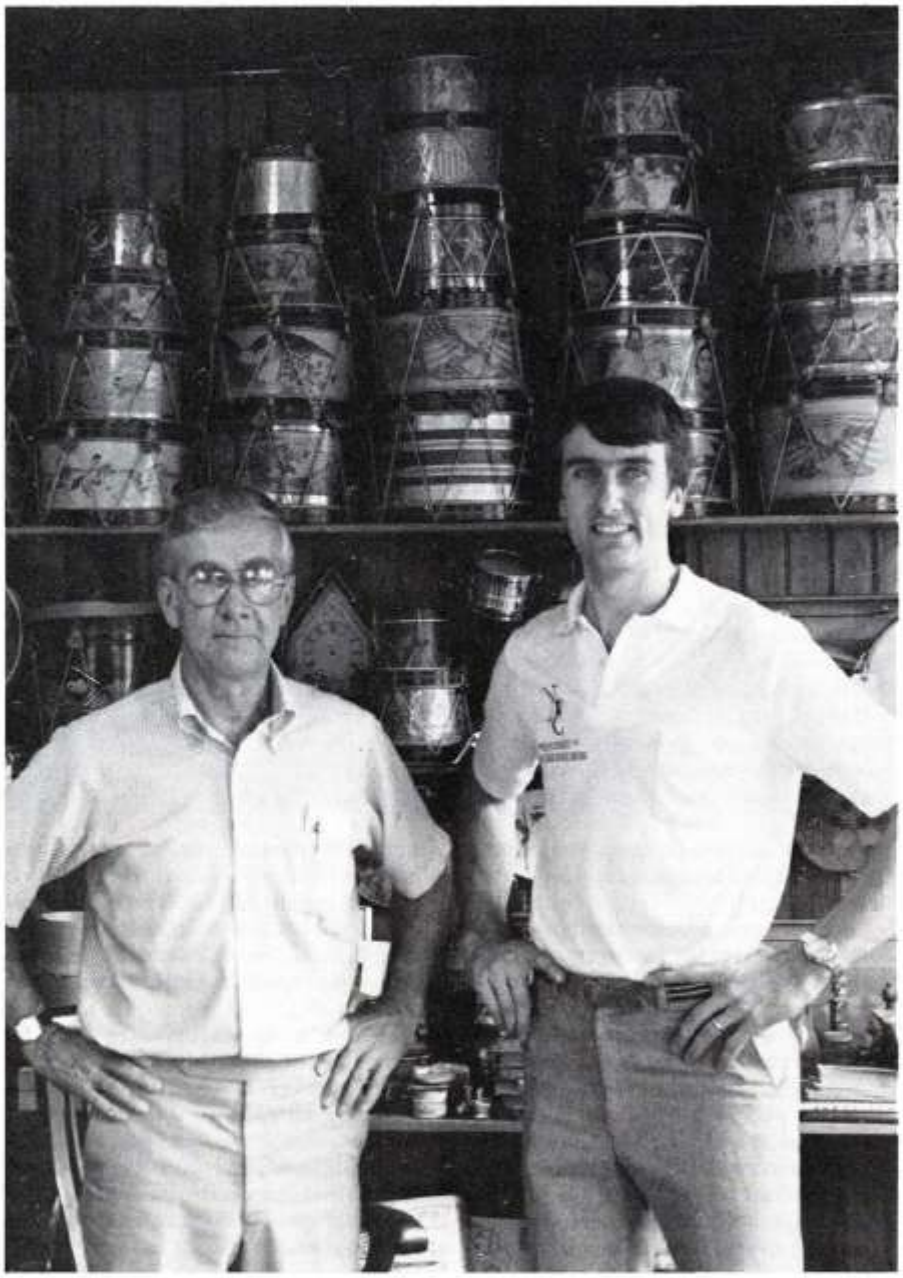
INSIDE NOBLE



Left to right: John and Jay Jones stand before examples ofN&C's ornate toy drums.

TAKE a moment to think about the number of fine, old American drum companies whose brand names reflect the name of the family that owned and operated the factory for many years. It's surprising how many come to mind: Ludwig, Rogers, Gretsch, Slingerland, Noble & Cooley . . . *Noble & Cooley?* Of course: a fine, old American company—located in rural Massachusetts—that's been making drums since the mid-1800s. You may very well have played on a Noble & Cooley drum at an early age—say, four or five. That's because, for over a century, Noble & Cooley has produced most of the toy drums sold in this country.

But wait a moment, you say. Weren't you in your favorite drum shop a few weeks ago, where you saw a snare drum that was anything *but* a toy, and didn't it have a Noble & Cooley badge on it? It sure did. This company, with its lengthy and fascinating history, is also at the forefront of custom snare drum and drumset design, creating solid maple drums of premium quality for discriminating drummers.

The Noble & Cooley factory is operated today by John Jones and his son Jay, who are descendants of James P. Cooley—one of the company's original founding partners. *Modern Drummer* recently had the opportunity to tour the historic factory. The following is a discussion with John and Jay. Also included in this discussion is Bob Gatzen, owner of Creative Music in Wethersfield, Connecticut and a prominent figure in the development of the new drum line. Jay Jones sets the stage by outlining the history of the Noble & Cooley company.

"We are the largest manufacturer of toy drumsets—and in fact the largest continuously operating toy company—in the country. We're still making the same product we started with 132 years ago. We started with individual toy drums. In 1854, Silas Noble made about 600 toy drums in his kitchen. By the turn of the century, the company was making 100,000 a year. Those were rope-tensioned, skin-head, wood-shell toy drums. We carried them right up to World War I, and after that, went to sheet steel instead of wood, and spring rods instead of rope tension."

John Jones explains how the company first got involved with *real* drums. "The company started making real, playable drums for the Civil War. In 1860, Noble & Cooley made a drum for Abraham Lincoln, from a rail he split in Illinois. It had sterling-silver hardware, and red, white, and blue silk cord. It was used in political rallies in Massachusetts and Connecticut. The company also made a drum for the 1876 Centennial that was eight feet in diameter! A team of horses could have been driven through the shell when it was finished. Then all of New England had to be searched to find oxen big enough to make the skin heads. The drum was used in peace rallies and in Grant's presidential campaign. It was stored in a building in Boston—which was the biggest in the world at the time—until a windstorm came up and collapsed the building, destroying the drum.

"Although the company always made toys, after the Civil War, it also continued to make what was called 'cord-and-ear' drums, which were rope-tensioned drums for fife & drum corps and that sort of thing. That went on up to the '20s, at which point it sort of fizzled out. Noble & Cooley went into making toy trap sets, of mahogany veneer, and school drums, which were 11" or 13" two- or three-ply

& COOLEY

Story and Photos by Donald Quade

thin drums for beginning fife & drum corps players in the fourth or fifth grade. So we had a school trade. The sheet-metal toy drums got started early, when our company would bring in the strips of metal, already highly lithographed and decorated, from Europe. The sheet metal would be folded up, gumwood hoops and the 'cord and ears' would be put on, and the drums would be put out. There would be embossed metal and decoupaged decorations as well. Some of the drums were quite ornate."

So from over a century of toy manufacturing, what prompted the Jones's to get the company involved with real, custom-quality drums again? According to Jay, "It started in 1976. A local musician—who restored antique drums and had several for sale in Bob Gatzen's store—found out that we did steam bending. He brought me a broken *Radio King* shell, and asked if I could make a one-piece shell to repair the drum with. I made one shell for him and then another. He said he thought there was a real niche in the marketplace for this kind of drum. One thing led to another, and four years went by, until we sat down and talked about seriously manufacturing drums of our own. That was October of 1980. The first prototype didn't come along for about a year and a half. I started experimenting with maple shells and had a lot of difficulty with them cracking. Those problems have since all been ironed out.

"I took one of the first prototypes under my arm down to Simsbury, Connecticut, when Buddy Rich was in town. I went out and talked to him on the bus, and he played the drum during his first set. Everything that could go wrong *did* go wrong that night; I'm surprised he didn't throw the drum off the stage. But he was very nice after the show. He told me the drum was a tub; he couldn't hear it from where he was. But he gave me some suggestions on it, which gave me a lot of knowledge to work with. At that same time, I started working with Bob Gatzen and taking the prototypes to him. He critiqued them, and made comments and changes. The first drums we made had a double-post hardware design. When we went to a single-post design, it opened up the bottom end of the drum tremendously; it let the shell vibrate much more. It took about four years before we could really say we had a drum to go on the market with."

Considering the craftmanship and the price, Noble & Cooley's snare drums are definitely targeted for the high end of the market—the discriminating pro drummer. Yet Jay, who was their primary designer, is not a drummer himself. "I do not play and never have; I really couldn't tell a good drum from a bad one by looking at it. That's where Bob Gatzen comes in. I did, however, pick my own drum out of a lineup. Bob played about seven or eight different snares lined up in his store. I narrowed it down to one I liked, and it happened to be mine. I don't know why or how, but that's what happened."

Probably the best-known solid maple shell snare drum in recent history is the Slingerland *Radio King.* Comparisons between that drum and the Noble & Cooley have been made, but Jay prefers to focus on the *differences* between them. "I used the *Radio King* as a guide. The first one that was brought to me was cut in half, so I had the basic thickness and dimension of the inside hoop that Slingerland used as an example. We changed both of those; we thinned the shell a bit more than on the *Radio King*—as well as the reinforcing ring. We also changed the bearing edges and snare beds drastically."

Bob Gatzen adds, "Our drum is in the *tradition* of a *Radio King,* but taken a step further. *Radio Kings* really don't have the sensitivity that our drum has. That's why a lot of rockers are really into *Radio Kings;* they're good at a certain volume. First of all, it's hard to find a *Radio King* that's round; most of them are out of round. And they have rounded bearing edges, so a lot of the head sits on the bearing edge. Our bearing edges are very sharp and true. Jay is really trying to make—as nearly as is possible with a solid maple shell—a perfectly round drum. It's difficult, even with ply shells, but with solid maple shells, you're talking even more difficulty."

The creation of those solid maple shells involves many unique operations. Jay details the process. "Our lumber comes from a sawmill run by a gentleman in Cummington, Massachusetts. We give him our specifications for some special maple wood, and he goes out, finds a tree, cuts it down, and brings it to us. The lumber comes in green. We plane it to very tight tolerances—plus or minus three or four thousandths of an inch—which is difficult to do in wood. The lumber is then steamed for six to eight hours at 15 pounds of pressure.

"The wood is steamed in a large steam chest—basically a big pressure cooker—that will handle up to 150 pounds of pressure. The company used to use it when the plant was run on a live steam engine—

A Noble & Cooley drumshell starts life in a "pressure cooker, " where maple boards are steamed and softenedfor bending.

A softened board is bent into a circular shell shape.

The shaped shell is glued and then placed into a mold under pressure.

The lap joint gives many square inches of surface contact to the glue joint, making it exceptionally strong.

Reinforcing rings are glued into the top and bottom of each shell. The rings are also bent from solid maple strips.

Each shell is hand-sprayed with several coats of catalytic lacquer.

before it all converted to electric power. The 'cooker' is six feet long, three feet high, and two feet wide. After being steamed, the lumber is run through the bending machine, which was installed in the '30s. The steamed and bent lumber is finally put into forms. The forms have to be clamped super-tight, to ensure the roundness of the shells. We drive wedges in, to make sure that the shell is drawn out into the form exactly—all the way around—through its entire drying process.

"We have 130 years of steam-bending experience—because both the hoops and the shells of all the toy drums used to be made out of bent wood—so the bending is the easy part for us. The curing process, however, is something we really had to work at. Once the shells are dried and cured—the time and humidity control are trade secrets, but it's a six- to eight-week process, minimum—they come out, and are lapped and glued in clamp forms. We use a 'tapered lap,' which means that the boards are tapered at either end so that, when they are bent around and lapped, the shell thickness remains exactly 1/4" all the way around. On a 7" deep drum, there are 28 square inches of glue surface, so it's actually much stronger than any other part of the wood. We also make reinforcing hoops, which are glued in on the top and bottom of each snare. They are also solid-wood strips, bent to special dimensions to fit into each drum.

"After the reinforcing hoops are installed, each shell is cut to exact height. The outsides of the bearing edges are radiused on a router. Then the insides are cleaned up, and 45-degree bevels are put in. The shells are then sanded with about six different grits, to get them down to the final polishing before spraying.

"On our honey-maple shells, we use three coats of maple spray stain and then three coats of polyurethane on top of that. The colored shells receive a catalyzed polyurethane finish, which has a real catalyst in it that gives it a very tough finish. It is as strong and flexible as the wood itself, so that it won't chip or flake. If you dent the drum, the finish will dent with it.

"We do all the spraying by hand. The drums are placed, one at a time, on a turntable that is turned by hand while we spray the shell. We have filters and other controls on our spray room to keep dust and contaminants out of the air. The urethanes take so long to dry that the shells have to be kept in a dust-free environment for at least eight hours after they've been sprayed. After the shells are sprayed with a sanding sealer, they are allowed to dry and then sanded with a super-fine paper before the color is put on. Then three coats of color are put on, with a final sanding before the last coat.

"The last step is the cutting of the snare bed and truing the bearing edge. The snare bed's depth is cut with a saw, but the bed is hand-sanded to get the exact configuration that we're after. Then the shell is put on a flat piece of marble with sandpaper glued to it, to make sure that the bearing edge is perfectly smooth and flat. If the drum has moved at all from the time it was first bent through all the finishing stages, we'll pick it up here. By this time, the shell is probably 12 to 15 weeks old. The finishes are all on it and the shell is very stable; it's not going to change any more at this point. This sanding will make the very pointed bearing edge that was created by machine a little flatter in some spots, while truing up the edge. We go back and hand-scrape the bearing edge to a consistent width all the way around, and then hand-sand it. Then we check it on a piece of marble, by shining a lamp into the shell. If we see light anywhere around the bottom of the shell between it and the marble, we know that more sanding is required. When the edge is completely true, we wax it, and then assemble the drum. The entire process, from start to finish, takes about 12 to 16 weeks, depending upon drying time and humidity conditions at the time we're putting the drums together."

The hardware on the Noble & Cooley snare is classic in its simplicity. According to Jay, "We machine our own brass lug fittings in our machine shop, which goes back quite a ways in history. In fact, some of the equipment in the shop came from the Stevens Duryea auto factory in Chicopee, Massachusetts. That should date it for you. We buy the brass tubing already made to our dimensions; all we have to do is cut it to the proper length, turn the threads on the insides, chamfer the ends, cross-bore it for the lug, and it's done. The screw that holds the hex-post to the drum goes right through the lug tube and locks it to the drum, so that the tube will not slide either way. The hex posts are created to our specifications by an outside machine shop. Our hardware is very low-mass, and only contacts the shell at one point, so it doesn't dampen the shell vibration much at all.

"Our snare throwoffs are stamped out of 3"-wide pieces of 1/8" brass. Seven die sets are used to make two of the parts. We have the knobs made outside, but do all the assembly here. The cast portion of the throwoff block is made by the 'investment' or Most wax' process. The piece is molded exactly, out of wax, and then the wax piece is sprayed with ceramic material, which is built up into a shell. Then the ceramic is baked, which allows all the wax to melt out. That leaves a ceramic shell, into which molten metal can be poured. It produces a very precise, clean part, with all the details we need already on—like 'dimples' involved in the machining process. All we have to do to them is touch-sand them—to take off the point at which they were attached to the mold—drill and tap them to take the clamping bar, and then polish them. They are then assembled with the

stamped pieces we make here, and attached to the drums.

"The rims for our snares are a story unto themselves. We went through a very extensive looking and designing process, in order to find our own 14", ten-lug rim. I went to Europe first, because I was originally looking for a brass die-caster. But we ruled that out very quickly, based on cost and tool life. We wanted to stay with die-cast rims, because of their feeling—the way they rimshot, and the way they tune the drums. While we were searching for a way to make our own rims, we were buying them from another drum company. We came up with a design for our own rim and blueprinted it out, but the cost was prohibitive, and we came to a dead end. But as luck would have it, the tooling for the Canadian Milestone drum company was available for purchase, and Milestone's rim was almost exactly what we designed, right down to the flats on the lug 'ears.' It had the depth and light weight we wanted, and still gave us the precision tuning and rimshot sound we were after. We made some final adjustments to the tooling to create a slightly greater curvature to the rim than it originally had, so that rimshots are very easy to hit and the rim doesn't bite sticks up as much. We picked up four tools, for 12", 13", 14" and 16" rims. It was just a case of being in the right place at the right time, and it eliminated our last big hurdle to putting out the snare drums commercially."

The thing that is likely to strike you first about a Noble & Cooley snare is its sensitivity. You can practically breathe on one and still get snare response, even a quarter of an inch off the rim. Does the company feel that that sensitivity specifically results from the solid-shell construction and the material? According to Bob Gatzen: "I think it's a combination of things. One of the key elements that we've worked on is the center mounting of the lugs because of the physics of the way the shell vibrates. The solid maple shells go into vibration much easier than do ply shells, and we've tested each under the exact same circumstances to prove that. We did an A/B comparison, using our own rims and fittings; the only difference was that one shell was ply and one was solid. The result was that the solid shell gives the drum the velocity to open up all the way—to get full volume. With ply shells, you have to whack them before they open up, and you get the meat of the drum. You can hit one of our drums with less velocity and still get a full sound out of it. And that's what is unique about our snare drum: the wide range of dynamics that is available in the drum. A 5" drum can be used in many situations. Ralph Humphrey told us that, when he goes to a studio date, he normally takes a 7" and a 5" snare, because he doesn't know what he's going to need. But he found that he could take his 5" Cooley, and it took care of everything. Steve Smith has a 5", and so does Phil Collins. You don't *have* to have a 6 1/2", 7" or 8" in order for it to do the job—although the timbre *is* different between the two drums, which is why we do offer a 7". Even with the 3 1/2" piccolo snare, it's the same thing: People hit it and say, 'Geez, this doesn't sound like a piccolo drum; it sounds gigantic.'

"We've come up with an idea where we have a RIMS unit made for the piccolo snare, so that it can be mounted and used as a secondary snare on a drumset. The piccolo is not very deep, so it's sort of like a Simmons pad. You can have two snare drums that way, with one suspended next to the hi-hat or hung over the toms. We're trying to break the tradition of the piccolo, and not sell it so much as a strictly symphonic drum, but rather as a drumset item—a different kind of application. That's something that's developed through this whole thing of single lugs and solid maple shells producing a much bigger sound."

After successfully developing and marketing a premium-quality snare drum, Noble & Cooley recently entered the drumset market, using the same unique methods of construction. Jay outlines the initial direction the company is taking. "The purchase of the Milestone tooling allowed us to proceed with the development of complete drumkits, and we now have a production drumkit available in limited sizes. All the drums are of bent, solid maple, except the bass drum—for the time being. If we do get into bending our own bass drum, it will probably be 14x18, although we might be able to get up to a 20". That'll be about the limit, because of the size of the single piece of wood necessary to bend into a 20" shell. On the other hand, if we continue to buy ply bass drum shells from outside manufacturers, we can specify anything we want, including size, material, number of plies, direction of plies, etc., so there's something to be said for that, as well. We're using die-cast hoops, and our own machined-brass lug fittings on all the drums. And those lugs are mounted at the nodal point of the shell. Every vibrating element has a nodal point where the frequencies cross, and there's no vibration at that point. Generally, the point at which a chime is hung or a marimba bar is placed on the instrument is a nodal point. We found the nodal point on each of our cylinders, and we mount the hardware at that point so that it does not detract from the vibration in the shell at all. We also supply the drums complete with the RIMS mounting system, and allow the dealer or the consumer to use the hardware of his or her choice. There is so much good hardware out there that there is no need for us to tool up to produce more. By the time drummers get to a stage in their careers to go for our drums, they'll already have their own preference in hardware. RIMS are now *sup-*

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Jay demonstrates how bearing edges are checked on a marble slab.

A finished Noble & Cooley snare drum, showing the machined-brass lug tubes and posts, as well as the snare throw-off.

Bob Gatzen playing a Noble & Cooley kit mounted on a Collarlock system. Note the nodal-point lug attachment towards the bottom of each tom-tom.

MODERN DRUMMER'S HONOR ROLL

Beginning with this year's balloting, artists who have been selected by the *MD* readership as winners in any one category of the *MD* Readers Poll for a total of five years will be placed on MD's Honor Roll as our way of recognizing the unique talent and lasting popularity of those special artists. Those artists' names will thereafter be presented each year in the Honor Roll section of the Readers Poll results, and the artists will no longer be eligible to receive votes in the category (or categories) for which they received Honor Roll status.

In order to initiate the Honor Roll, we have gone back over the previous seven Readers Polls and selected those artists who have been chosen by our readers as the tops in their fields for five or more years. Those artists are shown on the right, along with the categories in which they achieved Honor Roll status. In addition, as a result of this year's balloting, we are pleased to add Gary Burton (winner of the Mallet Percussion category for the fifth consecutive year) and Neil Peart (winner of the Multi-Percussion category for the fifth consecutive year, in addition to his previous Honor Roll status in the Rock Drummer category) to *Modern Drummer's* inaugural Honor Roll listing.

GARY BURTON
Mallet Percussion

AIRTO
Latin American and Latin/Brazilian Percussion

VIC FIRTH
Classical Percussion

Photo by Ebet Roberts

STEVE GADD
All Around Drummer; Studio Drummer

Photo by Dimo Safari

NEIL PEART
Rock Drummer; Multi-Percussion

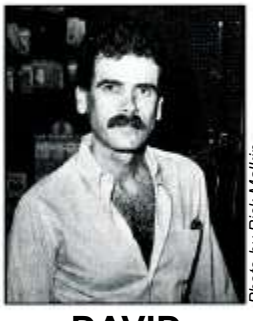

Photo by Rick Malkin

DAVID GARIBALDI
R&B/Funk Drummer

Photo by Veryl Oakland

BUDDY RICH
Big Band Drummer

'OLL RESULTS

HALL OF FAME

1986: TONY WILLIAMS

1985: Louie Bellson
1984: Steve Gadd
1983: Neil Peart
1982: Keith Moon
1981: John Bonham
1980: Buddy Rich
1979: Gene Krupa

ROCK

Photo by Lissa Wales

ROD MORGENSTEIN

2. Phil Collins
3. Steve Smith
4. Alex Van Halen
5. Terry Bozzio
   Stewart Copeland

COUNTRY

Photo by Rick Malkin

LARRIE LONDIN

2. Mark Herndon
3. John Stacey
4. Boo Boo McAfee
   Jimmy Fadden
   Paul T. Riddle

BIG BAND

2. Louie Bellson
3. Mel Lewis
4. Butch Miles
5. Peter Erskine
   Terry Clarke

Photo by Rick Malkin

ED SHAUGHNESSY

MAINSTREAM JAZZ

2. Alan Dawson
3. Jack DeJohnette
   Art Blakey
5. Jeff Watts

Photo by Veryl Oakland

TONY WILLIAMS

ELECTRIC JAZZ

2. Billy Cobham
3. Danny Gottlieb
4. Steve Smith
5. Peter Erskine

Photo by Joost Leijen

OMAR HAKIM

UP & COMING

MEL GAYNOR (Simple Minds)

2. Manny Elias (Tears For Fears)
3. Tommy Lee (Motley Crue)
4. Dave Weckl (Chick Corea)
5. David Uosikkinen (The Hooters)

MULTI-PERCUSSIONIST

Photo by Dimo Safari

NEIL PEART

2. Stewart Copeland
3. Alex Acuna
4. Sheila E.
5. Ed Mann

ALL AROUND

Photo by Dimo Safari

NEIL PEART

2. Omar Hakim
3. Rod Morgenstein
4. Simon Phillips
5. Phil Collins

REGGAE

2. Steve Nesbitt
3. Carleton Barrett

Photo by Ebet Roberts

SLY DUNBAR

LATIN/BRAZILIAN

2. Alex Acuna
3. Nana Vasconcelos
4. Tito Puente
5. Paulinho Da Costa

SHEILA E.

FUNK

2. Tony Thompson
3. Steve Gadd
4. Harvey Mason
5. Bernard Purdie

STEVE JORDAN

STUDIO

2. Phil Collins
3. Simon Phillips
4. John "J.R." Robinson
5. Vinnie Colaiuta

Photo by Denise Marie Luko

JEFF PORCARO

MALLETS

GARY BURTON

2. David Samuels
3. Lionel Hampton
4. Ed Mann
5. Milt Jackson
   David Friedman

CLASSICAL

Photo by Greg To/land

ANTHONY J. CIRONE

2. Arthur Press
3. Fred Hinger
4. Al Payson
5. Fred Begun
   Dean Anderson

RECORDED PERFORMANCE

NEIL PEART
RUSH:
POWER WINDOWS

2. Omar Hakim—Sting: *The Dream Of The Blue Turtles*
3. Rod Morgenstein—Steve Morse Band: *Stand Up*
4. Simon Phillips—Pete Townsend: "Give Blood" (from) *White City*
5. Billy Cobham—*Warning*
   Tony Thompson—The Power Station: *The Power Station*

In order to present the results of our Readers Poll, the votes were tabulated and the top five names in each category listed here. In the event that a tie occurred at any position other than fifth place, both names were presented and the subsequent position was eliminated. When a tie occurred at fifth place, all winning names were presented. In the case of the Reggae category, the top three names received the overwhelming majority of the votes, with the balance going to a wide variety of performers, so only the top three names were presented.

by Vinny Appice

Rock Drumming In The Studio

Photo by Gene Kirkland

Recording methods for rock drummers have changed drastically since the days of simply setting up the drumkit in the studio drum booth and plugging in microphones. Some drumkits don't even *fit* in a drum booth—mine, for instance.

Drummers today go from enclosing the set entirely with sheets of plywood and using numerous microphones, to simply setting up the drumkit in a room and using only two mic's to record with. The latter method has been used successfully on many recordings, and offers a very quick and simple mic' setup for the engineer. However, there are drawbacks, such as not having any control over individual drums, and finding the correct positions for the mic's.

I use the plywood method, enclosing the entire drumkit—including a roof—with sheets of plywood (leaving, of course, a viewing window through which the other members of the band can be seen). Then I mike each drum individually, along with setting up two room mic's in front of the kit. The advantage with this method is that the drums have a natural, deep, big sound (because of the sound reflecting off the plywood and going back to the mic's). I also have individual control for each drum, because each is individually miked.

Room and stereo mic's, when added to the mix, give a bright, ambient sound that is usually referred to as a "wet sound" and is used extensively today. These mic's diminish the need for many electronic effects.

Another method that I'm experimenting with is to mike the drumkit with individual mic's, but with no plywood enclosure around the drums, and no room or stereo mic's. This produces a "dead," clean sound, which is a good foundation for adding and experimenting with different reverb effects (such as EMT 250, AMS, and Yamaha *RE V* 7).

Another important factor is what microphone to use. There are many different mic's to choose from, but certain ones are better for certain drums. For example, a Shure *SM57* mic' is usually better for recording instruments with high frequencies—such as a snare drum—as opposed to using it to record a bass drum. (On the other hand, a mic' such as the *SM57* may be used on a bass drum in conjunction with another mic'. That will give you two different bass drum sounds that may be mixed together to form one sound.) Most engineers have their favorite microphones to use with different drums.

In order to make a great record, you have to be comfortable with what you hear in the headphones. In fact, the headphone mix is vital in getting a great performance on record. If you have a great sound in the 'phones, you may be inspired to play things you never thought you could play. On the other hand, if you *can't* hear what the other musicians of the band are playing, you might miss a great part that someone else played that might, in turn, have inspired you to play a great fill or pattern. The ideal setup would be to have individual headphone mixes for all musicians in the band in which they, themselves, could control the volume of all the other instruments. But most studios aren't set up for such an elaborate system. What I like to do is have my own amplifier to power my headphones, so that I at least have control of overall volume, treble, and bass.

Before getting involved with all the technicalities of recording a song in the studio, you must rehearse it thoroughly with the other members of the band. This is so you don't waste time learning the song in the studio at recording studio hourly rates. It is a good idea to practice the song many times, listening to each part to see what would feel right to play. For example, a verse may require a half-time, simple beat, whereas the chorus may call for a double-time feel on the hi-hat. Now, there might be a space for a fill from the last verse leading into the chorus. Such a fill at this point should be thought-out. Don't just play any old fill; listen to the song and see what would be appropriate to complement the song without getting in the way of the other instruments.

Fills could also be thought of as riffs. By that I mean, you might create a fill that is played throughout the song (maybe every last verse leading into the chorus), so that it becomes a repeated riff in the song. You may also want to "double" that riff in order to add more strength to it. To "double" means to play exactly the same riff on another track and then mix the two together. It becomes one strong track, adding a little more substance to that riff.

It's important to listen to the parts the other musicians are playing or singing. When I'm recording with Dio, I always listen for vocal riffs that Ronnie is singing. He may sing a vocal riff that I can duplicate with a drum fill, which adds a little more punch to that part of the song.

It sometimes happens that what you played while rehearsing doesn't sound as good in the studio, when you can listen to the playback and really hear what every instrument is playing. At rehearsal, you may not have noticed that a certain little part that someone was playing conflicted with another instrument. But on tape, you'll hear that it sounds "cluttery." So you may have to change that part. You have to adjust the parts you play to what sounds good in the studio. The same holds true when you perform the tune live at a concert—but in reverse. When playing live, you may want to play a bit harder and flashier.

The most important thing is to make sure you are comfortable with your sound and your setup. Those elements will contribute to bringing out the best performance in yourself—so let it rip!

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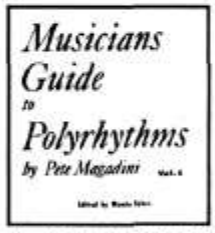

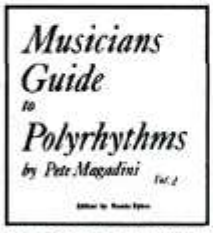

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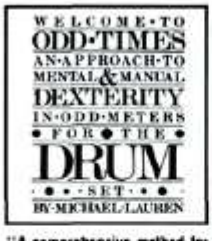

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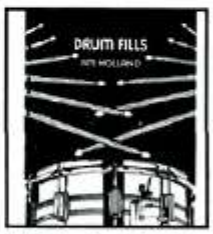

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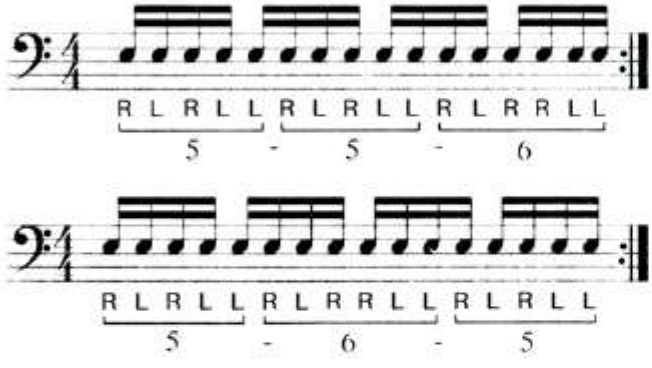
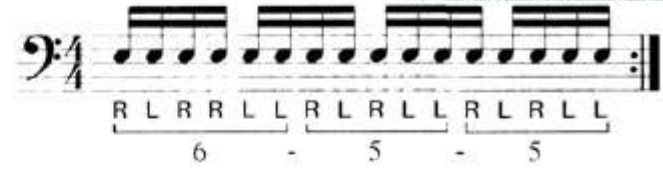
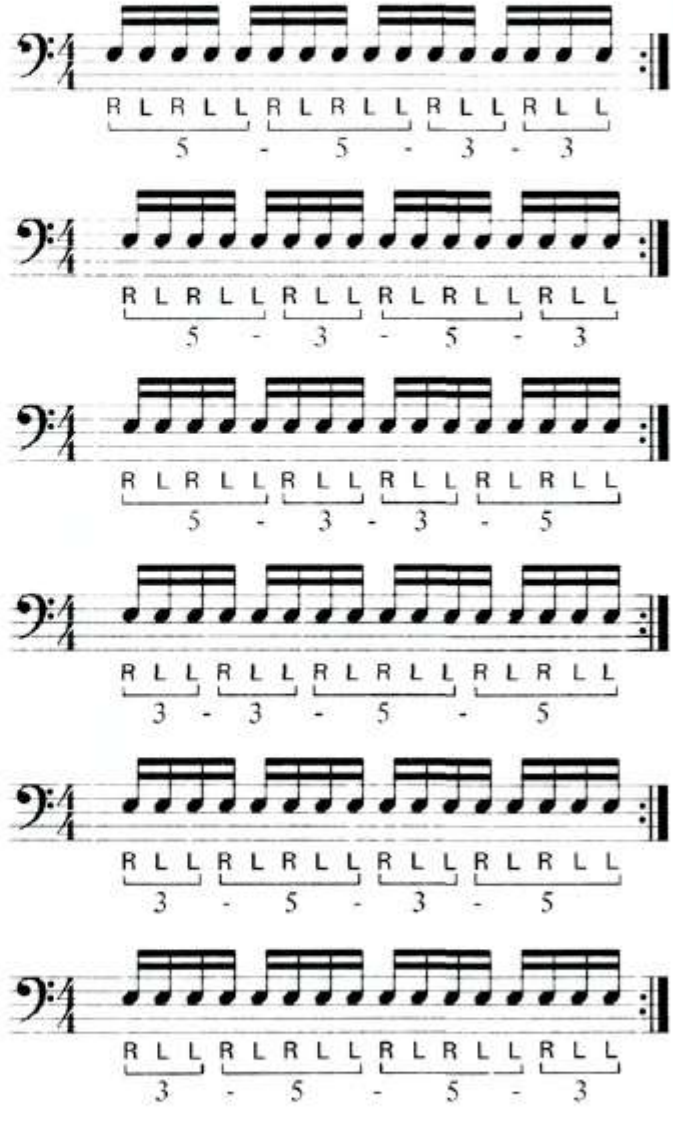
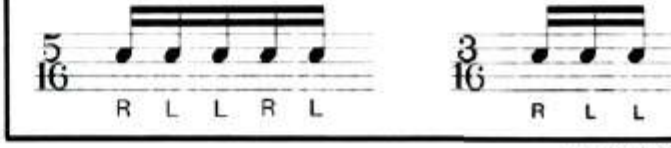
Phrasing Concepts: Part 2
Five- Note Groupings

by Joe Franco

Last issue's *Rock Perspectives* presented different ways of phrasing three-note groupings of 16th notes. The concept that was introduced was to arrange the groupings in a measure, assign stickings to them, and then switch the groupings around in every possible position. This article applies the same concept to five-note groupings.

By taking two five-note groupings and adding a six-note grouping, a measure of 16th notes can be formed. This measure can be phrased in three ways: 5-5-6, 5-6-5, and 6-5-5. By using RLRLL for the five-note grouping and RLRRLL (paradiddle-diddle) for the six-note grouping, the following three phrasings are formed:



By using the same five-note grouping (RLRLL) and dividing the six-note grouping into two three-note groupings (RLL.RLL), the following six phrasings are formed:

Try using the following combinations of five- and three-note groupings in the previous phrasings:

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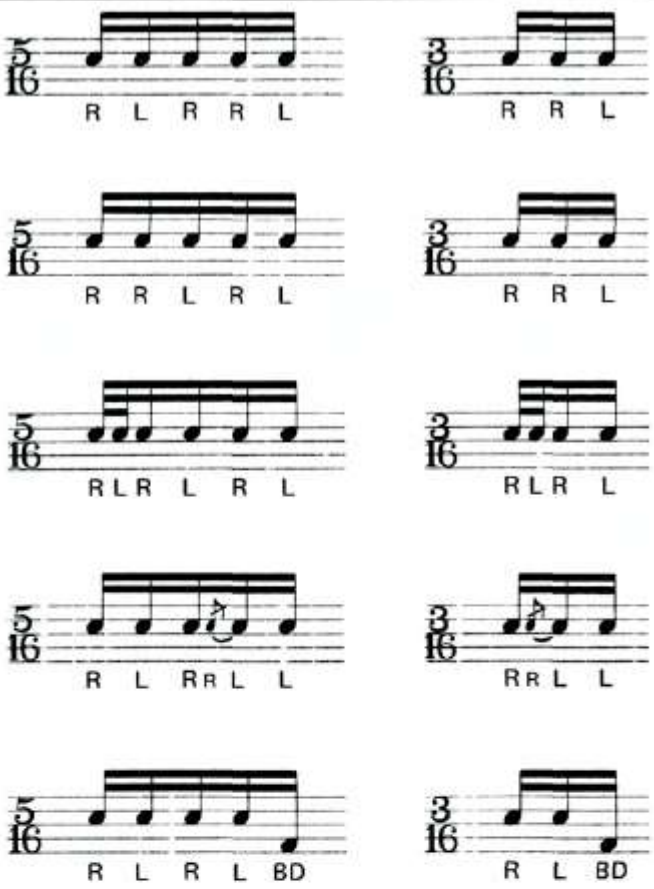
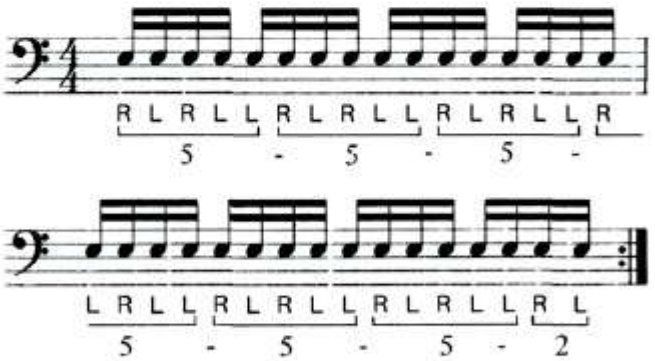


To further develop a feel for playing five-note groupings of 16th notes, try repeating a five-note grouping over two measures. Since there are 32 16th notes in two measures, you can play six five-note groupings with two notes left over. Here's what this looks like using RLRLL for the five-note grouping and RL for the two-note grouping:



Now try placing the two-note grouping in the other six possible positions:
5-5-5-5-5-2-5, 5-5-5-5-2-5-5, 5-5-5-2-5-5-5, 5-5-2-5-5-5-5, 5-2-5-5-5-5-5, and 2-5-5-5-5-5-5.

By now, I'm sure you have an understanding of this concept and how you can expand it. The mathematics might seem a bit sterile at first, but once you develop a feel for playing these odd-note groupings, you'll stop thinking about numbers. As I suggested in last month's article, when practicing these phrasings, play them with quarter notes on the bass drum. This will help develop a sense of where each grouping falls within the measure. Try applying these phrasings in your fills and solos. By voicing and accenting them in different ways on the drums, you'll develop patterns that are both polyrhythmic and melodic.

Larrie Londin

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by Tim Smith

Gary Chaffee

One would think that a drummer of high enough caliber to play with Pat Metheny, Dave Samuels, Steve Swallow, Jaco Pastorius, Abe Laboriel, and Gary Burton would be in the middle of an exciting playing career. One would also think that this same drummer would be crazy if all he really wanted to do was be a teacher. Gary Chaffee is such a drummer. Although he is an outstanding performer, Gary's main interest lies in teaching. As one of Boston's most in-demand educators, his credits include students such as Steve Smith, Vinnie Colaiuta, Casey Scheuerell, and Kenwood Dennard.

When Gary and I sat down to talk about teaching, I found him to be warm, reserved, and modest. His musical knowledge is far reaching, and his dedication to education is such that, if more teachers were of his mold, the world would be overrun with dedicated and inspired musicians. His goals have been the same throughout his musical life: to acquire as much knowledge as possible and give it back to those who wish to learn.

TS: Tell me about your musical background?

GC: My first teacher got me started with an introduction to percussion. I went to Potsdam in 1962, and the percussion teacher there was Sandy Feldstein, who is now head of publishing for Alfred Music. My intention was to become a good all-around percussionist. I never really intended to be a set player. To be a college percussion teacher was my main thing.

I did my graduate work at DePaul in Chicago. I went there because I wanted to learn something about studio playing, and Bob Tillis, who was on staff at ABC, was teaching there. After graduating in 1968,1 taught for four years at Western Illinois University. One summer, I was at a band show in Chicago, and happened to run into Gary Burton. We talked for a while, and he offered me a teaching gig at Berklee College in Boston. I went for one semester, but left because of problems I was having at the school. The next summer, I saw Gary again, and he said they wanted me to come back. The first time I was there, the percussion department wasn't all that developed. I tried to get some things happening, but I made a lot of waves. There was no real percussion department to speak of. There were no mallet ensembles and no training-level drumset classes. All the teachers taught on practice pads. I had come from a school with an organized program. When I got to Berklee, there were like 300 students and 15 teachers. I mean, here I was coming to *the jazz* school, and everybody was teaching and practicing on Fips practice pads. I couldn't believe it! It made it extremely difficult to teach anything about style, sound, touch, or tone. Eventually, things did change, and I got to redo a lot of the programs and introduce some new ones. After about four years, I got really burnt out, so I had to leave. I had been teaching at the college level for nine years, and I just didn't want to do that anymore.

TS: What *did* you want to do?

GC: Probably play more. One thing I will say about that period is that it was a positive one in the sense that a lot of talented people came out and have done very well: John Robinson, Steve Smith, Vinnie Colaiuta, Casey Scheurell, and Kenwood Dennard.

TS: What led you to private teaching?

GC: It's always been what I wanted to do. I just didn't want to do it in a school. It's a lot nicer now. My books have been starting to sell more, too. A lot of my students come to me because of what they've gathered from the books. I have four. The first is called *The Independent Drummer* and I have three books called *Patterns.*

TS: Do you get new input from the ways in which students interpret your work?

GC: All the time. It never ceases to amaze me. They'll come up with things I never dreamed of. Most of my students are over 20, but in the last four years, I've had a couple of high school students. I find that the younger students work so much harder and faster than the older students. These younger musicians have little extra to do, so they come home from school, go down to the drumset, and kill it for a few hours every day. I wish I had more students like that.

TS: How does it make you feel, being here in Boston, to have one or more of your students go on to be big names?

GC: Well, I'm 40 now, and I really think that all the major choices I've made along the way have turned me in this direction. Performing is just not the life-style I care to get involved with. I'm a small-town guy. I never had intentions of doing that sort of thing in the first place. I just wanted to be a good teacher, who also played. Some people say that, if you can't play, teach, which is a lot of bull. Teaching and playing are not the things we're talking about here; *learning* is the thing.

In some interviews with well-known musicians, they'll say they never studied. But it's not that they never learned anything, because in the next breath they'll say, "Yeah, but my dad was a musician, so all these guys were coming through the house." They were learning all the time, in the best way possible, too. Since I grew up in a small town, I was just glad there was someone there who had more knowledge than I had—someone I could learn from. Being a teacher doesn't make you any less of a player. If you don't play out a lot, you might be a bit weak on endurance, but that's nothing. I don't know any teachers who *just* teach.

TS: What would a first lesson with you be like?

GC: After getting some background information, I'll listen to them play a little bit of various types of time: jazz time, Latin, funk, 3/4, samba, bossa, rock. I'll have them do fills, some soloing, and linear things if they're hip to them. I'll find out where their reading is at. A lot of people aren't very strong readers, so I'll try to find things to get them going. Then, I'll find out what they're interested in pursuing. Most students have specific things in mind. I don't give technical things, because I'm more interested in what they're playing and expressing. Some students might even have something strange going on with their techniques, but I won't deal with it right away. Most times, they bring it up themselves, and that's when it's best. Of course, if I can foresee a future problem arising

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from the way they're presently approaching the drums, I'll offer a number of solutions, and together we'll find out what works best. There are drummers out there who play using all the grips and have fantastic technique, so who's to say? If there was some magical grip, we'd all be using it! There's still a growing controversy over matched and traditional grip.

TS: Yes, Mel Lewis had some strong ideas on that.

GC: Yeah, I read that interview. I was really kind of disappointed. We all know that the traditional grip developed long before there was jazz or a drumset. Jazz players adopted the grip, because it happened to be the grip of the times.

TS: It's really what you're comfortable with.

GC: Right. I switched from traditional to matched about 15 years ago, and it's never really bothered me. I think it's all in what you're used to and how much time you have to learn another way, if you wish to do so.

TS: Do you find it frustrating, with the popularity of rock, to have a lot of students but not be able to teach them what you feel you're strongest at?

GC: Not really. There's a lot that I can do in areas they don't know about. I don't knock that style of music at all. It's taste, choice, and what you prefer to get into. It's great for me, because they'll usually have more information on different idioms than I do, so I get to learn, too. I'll have more concepts about what you could do with it later on, so when you put those ideas together, some interesting ideas will arise.

Pop music needs more people playing more interesting things. I think they're backing themselves into an electronic corner. They've been playing these flat beats for so long that, now machines can play it *better.* The more things we can do to diversify the time a bit, the better it will be. It won't be any less danceable, just more interesting.

TS: Terry Bozzio seems to bring a new concept to playing in that vein.

GC: Absolutely. A lot of students come to me for that sort of thing: the polyrhythm stuff. A lot of others are under the impression of, "Okay, if you're going to play with Zappa, *then* learn it, but otherwise you don't really need it." But you *learn* to play free over the bar line. I mean, if we spend all this time learning how to play 8th notes, 16th notes, and triplet rhythms, then why should we approach the other stuff any differently? Anyone would be a fool to think that you would use that stuff as much as the common things. But, on the other hand, it's like something special, and you don't use something special all the time, do you? You use it when it's right for the music and when you want a specific thing to happen. It does take a good amount of time and work to get that stuff together. It's really worth it though, and players find there's more they can apply it to than they think.

TS: What teaching aids do you use?

GC: I have two sets where I teach. I also have a Dr. Beat, an amp, and a tape deck all hooked up to a junction box, so we can both play to a record or click track and record it. I feel that it's good to create actual playing situations as well as doing book work in a lesson. I don't really teach rudiments. I have my own system of sticking. Most of the students who come to me already know the rudiments. My teaching system is different. I figure that I spend 90% of my time concentrating on time playing. I think that's where the focus needs to be. My goal is to teach drummers how to play time feels, not beats or patterns, and how to improvise within those time feels.

Some students have to deal with the frustration that conies with progress. When you're younger, things kind of go along fairly consistently. You absorb the information and concepts at basically the same time. As you get older, the issues get subtler, and you'll be going along and hit a wall that you'll have trouble getting over. You seem to bounce up against this wall time and time again, but somehow, usually through plain effort, you break through. And when you do, a whole new plateau opens up, and it brings you up to a new level. This seems to happen to everybody. Students shouldn't get nervous about it. There's no set answer to that sort of thing. You just try to go with it, but if it's really hanging you up, then you switch gears, try something else for a while, and come back to it. I try to get as much information out as I can. I don't get too concerned if students don't understand it *all* at first. I just want them to know about it and be aware. They've got the rest of their lives to figure out what it means and what to do with it.

TS: Do you believe that a student either has it or doesn't have it?

GC: I believe everyone has talent. I know a lot of people who've worked real hard and have become good players. Drums may not be the perfect thing for you, but if you want it badly enough, you'll work at it. Also, what is this mythical standard we're talking about? I mean, we both know there are drummers out there making a million bucks, who by most standards, aren't that strong, and we both know incredible players who aren't making a dime. Who's to say what this magical level is?

TS: Do you ever do group drum lessons?

GC: I really like group lessons. I did them a lot when I was at Berklee. I would have three or four drumsets to work with at a time. One day we'd do Latin stuff. Another day we'd work on soloing. It was hip because everyone got to do a lot of playing, and there were all these ideas coming from three or four different sources at the same time. The students, upon hearing their peers working on the same ideas, would become more aggressive and more willing to take certain risks.

A lot of students will say they're nervous sitting opposite a teacher who knows the material a lot better. It's a bit intimidating. I try to convince them that they should never feel that way. I try to get them to relax and be themselves. To some, however, playing with their peers is really okay. Invariably, there will be people at different levels, and as the teacher, I have to know who is where so as not to bury any one drummer with the strengths of another. Say you are working on soloing and phrasing ideas. There will be certain phrases that everyone will be familiar with, because they were part of a previous assignment. You'll get four or five different perspectives on the same idea. They will be endless, because no two will be the same. It's a much richer dose and it works out well, even if the students *are* at different levels.

TS: I sometimes think that, with the popularity of video and media hype, a fantasy image has been created about being a musician that has turned kids on to music because of money and the idea of becoming a star. Do you think this affects the quality and seriousness of the new drummers?

GC: Not really. I think the drummers who would be turned on by all that are the ones who would normally go in that direction. The ones who can see the shallowness of all the hype won't be affected. They realize it exists but can get around it. What you say is definitely true, though. Some drummers are really turned on by the "show-biz" stuff, where everything else is as important

as the music, or more so. Some really like it and desire to become stars. Most musicians realize that the show-biz-type gigs are usually the big money makers, and almost everyone hopes for the *ideal* gig where you can be creative and still make money. That kind of gig is pretty rare. I'm sure a person like Steve Smith is very happy doing his own music in Vital Information, where he can get into his jazz and funk roots more, and still be able to make the money he did with Journey.

TS: With the popularity of pop music, is it more difficult now to teach other styles?

GC: Most drummers who have an interest in other styles will express it. I don't push it on those who don't. I've had drummers come in here who were definitely rockers. Who am I to tell them that it can't be that way? I mean, I'll mention it and expose them to it, but they're adults. They can make their own choices about what they want to play.

TS: What's your opinion of correspondence teaching?

GC: I've done a little bit, but it's tough to get your material organized enough to be able to do that well. Some teachers have big systems worked out and charge big bucks. The ones that I've done have taken a long time to prepare. I think that, if you don't have any other choice, it might be the way to go, but personal contact is really the best way. It's more significant for the student. Lots of times, a small adjustment or a slight subtlety at just the right moment can make all the difference in the world.

TS: What's the greatest disservice a teacher can do to a student?

GC: To say, "Do it *this* way, because I do." Also, not teaching students to think for themselves, take chances, make mistakes, and go for their goals.

TS: On the other side of the coin, what's the greatest service a teacher can do?

GC: To help the student develop that onward approach to music, and to help create the interest and enthusiasm to explore. I always try to get the students to be themselves, find out what it is they want to do as players, do it, and then live with whatever happens. You're going to be best as a player when you're playing the most truthfully. And that's when you're playing exactly what you want to play. Granted, you don't often get into those ideal situations, but that's the goal of those who are moving forward—to express your ideas and not someone else's. Everybody's got something to say. So, as a teacher, whatever you can do to bring out that individuality in a student is the thing to do.

TS: What sort of material do you cover in your clinics?

GC: Mostly time-functioning material and maybe some soloing. I try to do something they'll enjoy and be able to use in their own playing. I usually do some sticking and articulation things; also, the linear stuff is very popular.

Right now I have some video projects going with a friend of mine. I've had many requests for this sort of thing, so we formed a company and have been working on various presentations. The first video is out on the market. I'm really excited about it, because it allows me to reach more people.

The main interest, however, in my clinics has been polyrhythms. People get very interested when you play something over something else. I believe they like learning something that actually gets them thinking a little bit. The stuff is in my books, and I'd be lying if I said I wasn't trying to promote them a bit. But still, the most important issue to me is to get that information out there for drummers to try.

TS: Overall, is experience still the best teacher?

GC: I believe you learn from two sources. You learn basic skills and techniques from a teacher. After that, you learn how to apply those skills through practical experience. You don't learn how to read from experience. You apply reading skills through experience. I think everyone needs both kinds of learning. When you go out and play with a band, it's never totally free. There are always some restrictions. You start and stop with everyone else, and hopefully play the same tempo. What I'm saying is that there's always something to learn about the art and craft of music. I'm glad I like Beethoven. I don't play it, but I've learned something from his music that I didn't learn from playing "Stella By Starlight." There are a lot of valuable things out there.

Cobham continued from page 21

BC: Yeah. About me being a musician, it was like, "I know something's missing in my playing. I don't know what it is, but somehow I'll get it somewhere, I guess. I hope." I'd hear people in school play the drums, and my jaw would drop. I'd say, "Gosh, I've got so far to go. There's so much I need to learn." I'd hear guys play rolls, and the rolls would be clean as a whistle, and I'd say, "Gosh, I've got to figure out how to get that down." I practiced.

WFM: You must have spent a lot of time practicing.

BC: Oh sure. I guess, in a way, I sacrificed a lot of other things to practice, but I never considered it a sacrifice. I worked seriously on technique, reading, and just grooving on the set. I wanted to develop a strong foundation.

WFM: At that point, you were playing pretty much just traditional. When did the whole left-hand ride thing come into your head?

BC: That happened actually around 1959, because it seemed to make a lot of sense to play that way.

WFM: Was that just something you decided to do—your own idea?

BC: It seemed to make a lot more sense than to have a cymbal on my right-hand side and a hi-hat on the left. I said, "I'm going to have a lot of sticking problems if I want to go to this drum over here," because I always thought about more than one rack tom on the bass drum. I said, "Gosh, if you had different sized drums, it would make a lot more sense. It would be a lot more exciting." With the ride and hi-hat being on the same side, it opened up my concept to add as much as I wanted to, to inspire me. I kept seeing people like Rich and Shaughnessy and all of the guys from that school. They all seemed to make the same statement in the same way, and they seemed to limit themselves to a certain approach and setup. They tended not to lend themselves to the music really, as in terms of the drumset being designed for the music. The drumset was always the same. All the dimensions were the same. They played the same patterns. They all mimicked each other a lot. The only way you could tell that one guy wasn't Buddy Rich was if he played a figure that he couldn't get across as well as Buddy could.

There were a few exceptions. If you heard Max Roach, you knew that Max played a certain kind of way and his drums were tuned a certain way. The thing about Max that set him apart was that he tuned the drums so that you heard a high-pitched drum and a low-pitched drum, and it was with a tone, which I like. Whereas Rich had this whole thing where it was technique, technique, technique—tremendous technique—musicality from a rhythmical standpoint. Mel Lewis to me sounded like somebody who was throwing garbage cans out the window all the time, and everything was always in time. When they hit the floor, you knew that I was there someplace. You knew that was Mel. The snare drum was so loose that it tickled my funny bone, and I thought that that was musical in its own way. Then you had Art Blakey, whose grunts and groans were more musical than what he played, but it was all tied in together and it made musical sense. His shuffle was the heaviest shuffle ever. There was Papa Jo Jones, who played brushes in such a way that it was amazing. What I'm saying is, each guy, for me, took a little part of the whole and developed it. My objective was to develop the whole: be strong in brushes, strong in different styles of music, have good technique, have a good sound, a good feel, and a concept that would work in all categories. I thought that left-hand lead was a way of

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Playing melodically, as well as rhythmically, is very important to me. When I was developing, I wanted to be able to get around the set, in any direction, with ease. Left-hand ride gave me strength and independence to play patterns in any direction, so I could make a musical statement in any way. Now I like to do things where my hands move in totally opposite directions from one another. I can set up some interesting sound combinations on the drums this way.

WFM: Since you were the first to develop the left-hand ride technique, did you take a lot of heat from people when you were coming up—people who said it was wrong?

BC: Of course. I failed the test at the Manhattan School Of Music, because I played ride patterns left-handed. They said, "You'll have to change," and I said, "Why do I have to look a certain way to play?" I didn't feel it was necessary, so I just didn't do it. I was going to take the test at Berklee, and they said, "You have to change." I knew I could make it work, and I wasn't going to give it up just because of someone's fear of something new. Now people realize that it works, and I think it has opened up people's minds even more. There is so much happening. I feel that you have to keep an open mind. I feel that that helps me in my clinics. Everything is made to be designed again to suit the situation. I play a certain way now. Everybody says, "Hey man, that's happening." Next year, it may not be. Someone else will come along and develop an idea in a new direction, and if it works, I hope people accept it, even if it is different.

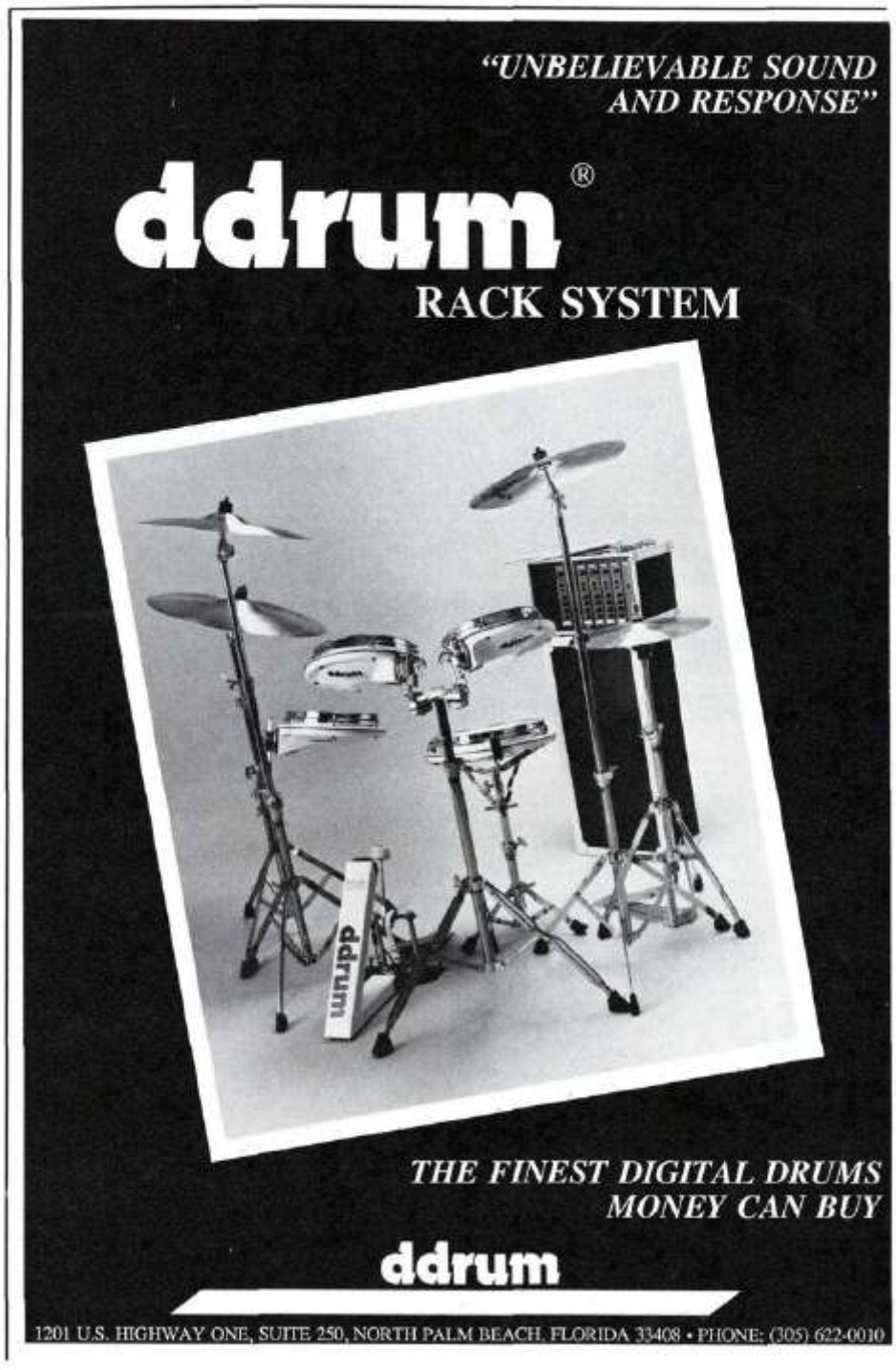
WFM: It seems that now drummers don't have to be as creative as they were before. I mean, if you want to play a hi-hat without crossing your hands, the technology is making that possible. If you want to come up with interesting sounds, you just program them in. Technology seems to be coming up with devices that solve problems and take away a player's creativity.

BC: But you know, a lot of these types of things have been around. I mean, just because technology comes up with something new doesn't mean that everyone is going to use it, or that everyone won't be creative with it. The tunable floor tom has been around for years and years. Back in the '40s, Papa Jo had one. Chick Webb had one. The chain pedals were made back in the '30s and '40s. They went out of style. The remote hi-hat stand was made in the '30s and '40s. All this stuff was around. Some of the guys who could tell you about stuff like that are Bob Yeager at the Professional Drum Shop in L.A., and Al Duffy who's now with Pearl. Al made all my drums back in the '70s before I went with Tama. He's a wealth of information. He built that chain pedal and started that stuff. Al built a lot of my custom drums, but that stuff was happening, again, back in the'40s. You just said, "Hey, let's make a gong drum, and let's just do that again—put a timpani head on a 22" shell or put a 26" head on a 24" shell and tighten it down." Put some timpani lugs on it and "boooing." All that stuff just comes about, and nothing's new. We just use it in a different way. Players are going to take these supposedly new things coming out and be creative with them.

WFM: When you were coming up, it must have been really tough to persevere at something that so many people were telling you couldn't work.

BC: Yeah. I think the second you tell yourself you can't do something, you're not going to be able to. I'm not that way. I'll try something. I might fall flat, but if I don't try, it won't ever work. For instance, I'll try any grip on the drums, not just matched or traditional. If I experiment, I can come up with things that inspire me.

When I do clinics, I run into people who will only play a certain way. I remember one time, specifically, in Germany. I was sitting in front of about 1,500 students, and a guy said, "My instructor has said that the pattern you played on this record



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such-and-such is improper and cannot be played that way. Is this true?" I said, "I'll show you how I did it." I played it right-handed. Then I played it left-handed. The instructor was sitting there and I had just proven him wrong.

One of the big bummers about a situation like that is that you know you're losing an account, because, in such situations, the instructors are the people who got you there. They have an obligation to the rest of the kids. They've told everybody that something I've done is not possible, and they run the place. I sit down and say, "Well, I can only show you what I did." Then, I go ahead and disprove their theories in front of them, while they have to sit there smugly, not saying anything.

WFM: It puts you in a bad light.

BC: Yeah. There's not a lot one can do about that. I haven't been asked back to that place since. Those things happen. If people close their minds off to new or different things, there's not much you can do. I see a lot of drummers ignoring and closing their minds to drum machines. I talk about programming drum machines a lot and have written about it in *Keyboard* magazine, trying to show keyboard players that, if they're going to do this, they should think like drummers. Drummers are afraid of the machine, but they don't realize that they can hear drum rhythms better than keyboard players. If you're going to play the drums, play this, too. If you don't want to lose your gig, learn how to work with the machines, so that you can do it and be the drummer on the session, and also develop material. My whole concept is to keep your mind open to everything, and then to tie it into your overall concept. Therefore, you still have control over it all, because it's there for you to use now as a tool. Try to interface that with your drumset, so you can trigger that sound. It sets you in a light where you are still the individual. I think it's all possible. With technology the way it is today, anything is possible.

WFM: You talked before about the different ways you grip the sticks. You use some techniques that are highly refined, like a French-style timpani grip. How did you develop that, since you haven't studied with anyone?

BC: Through people like Vic Firth. I used to watch Vic a lot, unbeknownst to him, and he's always used that technique. I've always used that for certain things, and it's perfect for playing drumset. The thumbs-up finger-control grip remains consistent around the drums. What you want to do is actually use your fingers to manipulate the

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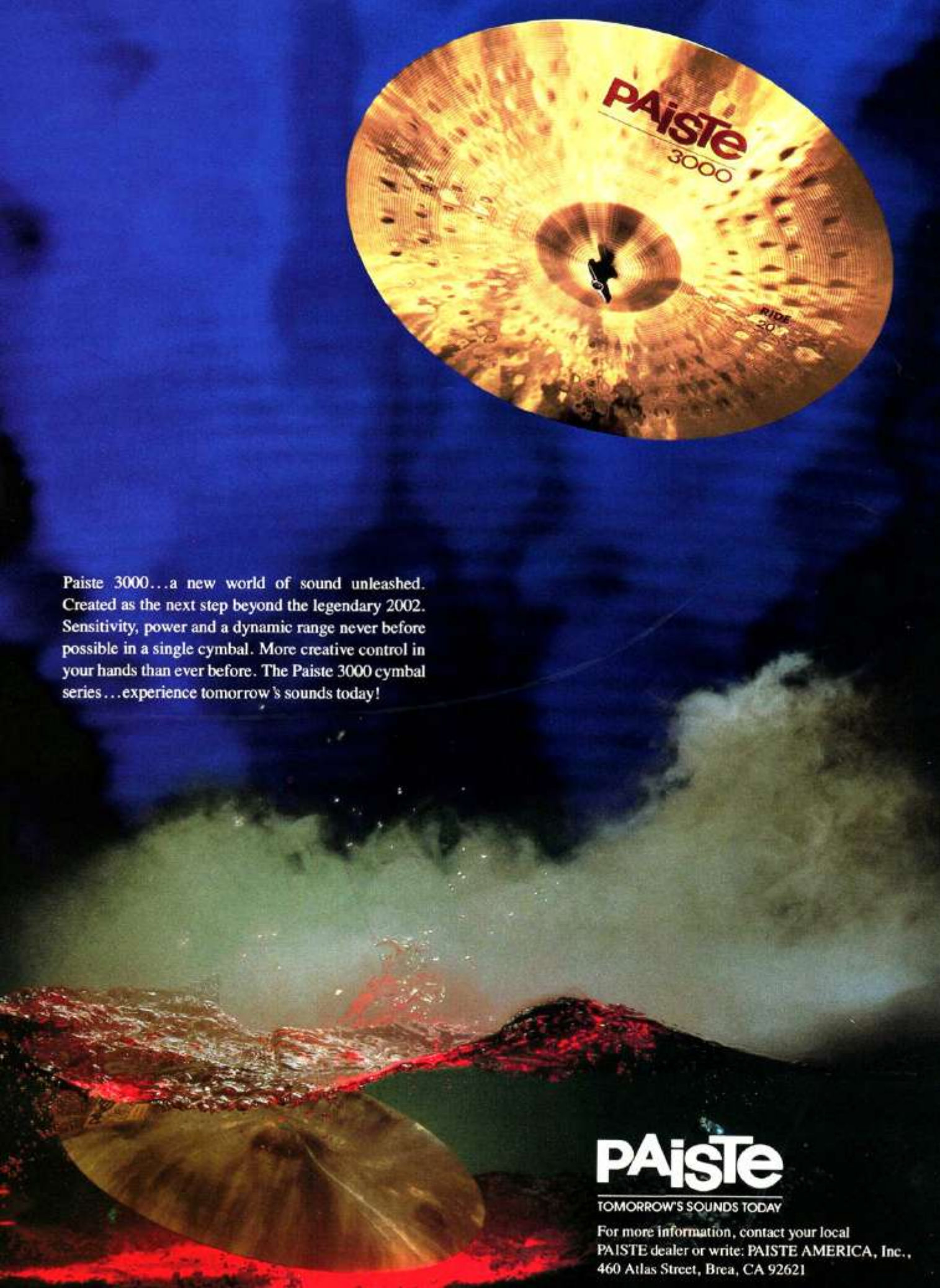
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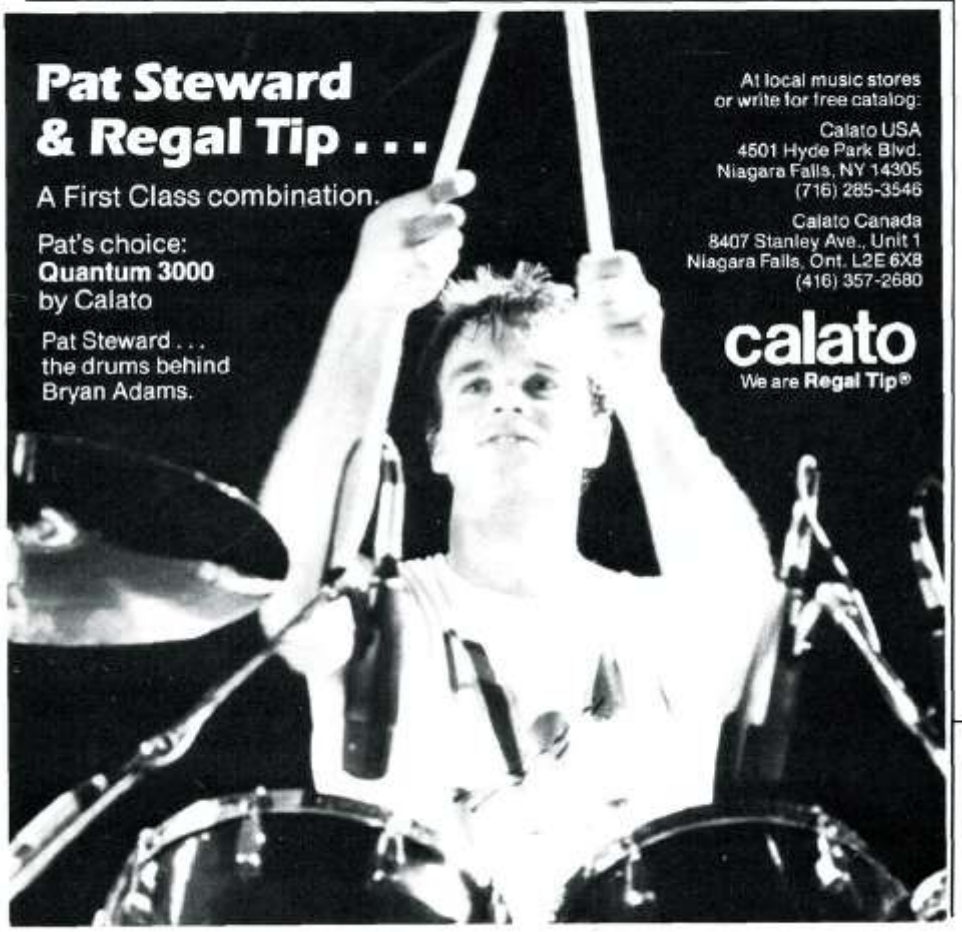

stick.

There's a pattern that I play on my new album on a piece called "Summit Afrique" where there's a drum solo for a minute and fifty-nine seconds, and there's a section in that solo where I used the French grip to play on two high-pitched drums. This is where the French grip comes in handy a lot, because the tighter the skin, the easier it is to manipulate the stick. All you want to do is keep the stick going. I'm able to play on two drums—play a roll on one drum and hit the other drum, maintaining the roll. I can play very clean singles all day with that grip. In the solo I mentioned, it almost sounds like I overdubbed the other drum. You can only do that with your fingers, because you don't have the tension you would normally have if you played the German, palm-down method. If you want to be able to sustain and prolong a certain kind of pattern, it's easier to do it the French way.

WFM: What about playing something like doubles?

BC: Doubles are a bit easier with the German or traditional grips. Since I position myself higher, above the kit rather than behind, the French grip gets me around the drums more efficiently.

WFM: You do sit very high when you play. How does that affect your overall balance when you're playing double bass?

BC: When I'm sitting high and playing double bass, I'm actually sitting as erectly as I can in my upper body and I'm projecting, again, from my key in the center of my body. I like to be able to see over the set. I like to have everything flat and facing me, except for the toms, which are angled towards me, but not severely. I can touch things, and what I want to do will determine how long my stick will be. So in my stick bag, I may have three different size sticks, depending on what kind of music is being played and what drums I want to address. I'll change right in the middle of a song if necessary. You know, the music comes first. I'll use a 767as opposed to an *808,* depending on a certain area of the piece. I may change to a 707 if I need to, because I'm dealing with beads and attack on the cymbal, attack on drums, and getting thinner sounds where I need it. It doesn't really matter that much. What matters depends on the kind of effect I want.

WFM: We were talking about your posture before. Whenever I have seen you perform, you look like a member of royalty reigning over your drums.

BC: Oh, yeah? Well, the whole idea is to be

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able to play and enjoy it. You have the best seat in the house. Drummers don't think carefully about how they sit at the drums. They're more interested in how the drums look than they are in how they position themselves on the drums.

The whole idea is to be able to project. That comes from the knowledge of how to set the drums up so that you can project through the drumset, which is very, very important. You can't do it by yourself; your drums have to help you, not hold you back. If you play the drums and the heads are loose, you're only going to get low tones, and you're going to be playing much harder because the drums are not reacting. If you play and tune them properly and tune the bass drums to get good pounds-per-square-inch sound movement inside the bass drum, you're going to get a lot more projection. You're going to play a lot easier. Depending on what kind of shoes you wear, how high you sit off the drumset, and the length of sticks you use, you get a lot of different things happening.

WFM: How do you tension your pedals?

BC: Very loose. With chain pedals with springs, I like to get a lot of reaction right off. I don't want to work very hard with my feet, because they tire easily.

WFM: How did you develop your double-bass playing?

BC: It actually happened during the Mahavishnu Orchestra right in 1972.

WFM: What prompted it? You went from a single bass and a couple of rack toms to a double bass and a lot of toms.

BC: John McLaughlin did, quite honestly. He said, "Would you play two bass drums in the band?" I didn't feel that I had learned enough about one bass drum, but I thought I would try. At first, I started practicing in a room. I opted for a real cop-out way. I said, "I'll bring another bass drum, and I'll practice it in a room. When I get it together, I'll bring it on stage." Then, I found that I was copping out. I felt like, if you really want to do this, you'll just put it on stage and play. So I did. I said, "I'll learn as I go. Either I'm going to make some musical statement or I'm going to make an idiot of myself." It was a challenge that way. I decided I'd do it. The first things I did were just to maintain some kind of sustained pattern, playing even 16th notes. After a while, I started to think about paradiddles and other patterns that I could use as variations on time feels. From that point, I developed my feet to play fills, just as my hands would. In a way, I took the same basic approach to developing the coordination of my feet that I used on my hands.

WFM: Did your concept have to change in going from the small kit to the big kit, or did it just adapt?

BC: I had to adapt. I had to make adjustments.

WFM: What kinds of things do you practice now to keep your skills up, or do you get to practice at all?

BC: Normally, I carry a pad with me. I practice a lot of finger-control patterns, just bouncing the stick while all the time keeping my fingers nimble. With the bass drums, whenever I have the chance, I play rudimental patterns, and it's not just movement of feet. It's sitting properly. It's a lot of posture—being cognizant of my posture all the time, sitting so that I can project. That's primarily what I do. I really think a lot about how I address the drumset, which I feel is the key to playing. If you sit down at a drumset and you don't know what you're going to do with it, you've lost before you've even started.

WFM: You go from one interesting concept to the next. You had the mounted bass drums, you had the triple bass drums, the triple snare drums, the *Octobans,* the gong drums, etc. Do you have anything happening now?

BC: Yeah, sure. Let's try the toms being changed around. This idea has come out of clinics—questions like, "Billy, I play a club date, and I have a small multi-tom set. My band plays the same music over and over. What can I do to prevent boredom?" I'll say, "Well, why don't you take your 12" tom that's over here on your left and your 15" tom that's over here on your right, and put the 15 where your 12 is, and put your 12 where your 15 is?" You'll never be bored, because you'll be playing something that you expect to produce a certain sound and it won't produce that sound. All of a sudden, your eyes will stay open and your awareness will increase because you'll be thinking, "I'm playing my patterns, but my 12" tom is very deep sounding all of a sudden." What that did for me was make me realize that we all take for granted the sounds of our drumsets. We get used to those sounds and that sound perspective. So, the first thing I did was change all the drums around. Now I

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have to play again. I have to open my eyes, and that's really important. If you're in control of the drumset, you should keep your eyes open, and you should be able to play the drums that you want to play when you want to play them.

WFM: I was looking at some recent photos of you and thinking, "Man, something looks a little funny here." What's going on? [laughs]

BC: That's right. It does look different.

WFM: Could we talk a little bit about equipment?

BC: Right now, I'm using the power tom stuff, and it's still Tama *Superstars,* because I believe in the *Superstar* shells more than I do the *Artstar.* I personally don't like the sound of thin shells that much. I have a set of *Artstars* that I think leaves a little bit to be desired for me for the way I play. Most people are really into the *Artstars,* but I'm used to the *Superstar* thickness and sound.

As for cymbals, Zildjians are it. I use mostly A's, but occasionally, I'll pull out a K also. I've also got some cymbals with those Z's on them. It's still a cymbal somehow. The sizes change depending on what I'm doing. I did use a 13" set of hi-hats on the new album, and they sounded great. For *Power Play,* I used a whole set *of Platinums* and they worked out nicely. We had a ball, but we worked in a studio that was really lively at Atlantic—the old Atlantic main studio, which gets a monster drum sound. If they could just get the cue system together for headphones, it would be alright.

WFM: Is it a big room?

BC: Relatively. It's just a hard room. It's got a cement floor, wooden walls, and stuff like that. So a wooden snare drum sounds like a cannon in there.

Speaking of snare drums, I've also been using a Chip Graphite snare drum. It's a prototype from Tama. I've also been working with the Bird's Eye Maple snare drum that I love very much.

WFM: What does this Chip Graphite give you?

BC: It's a metallic sound—a very loud sound that's still not controllable. It's really like going back, for me, to the days of my old Hinger 37-pound snare drum with the Allan-wrench lugs. Why you do something like that is way beyond understanding, [laughs]

WFM: You said something before about the cymbals you were using: *Platinums* and the Z Series. What do you think about the drum industry's craze over the cosmetic thing?

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BC: They don't have any other place to go. It's all been done. It's either cosmetics or you come up with a little company, like Noble & Cooley, that comes up with a drumset that's logical. It just costs a lot of money. I think it's a fantastic-sounding drumset.

WFM: I haven't heard the drumset, but the snare drum sounds great.

BC: Oh man, the whole drumset is a monster, but we're talking about getting Rolls-Royce to build you a special car. [laughs] The assembly line version of Noble & Cooley would probably be Sonor, with Tama right there.

WFM: What are you doing for muffling on your equipment.

BC: *Muff'ls* — do you know *Muff'ls?*

WFM: The Remo product?

BC: Yeah. My bass drums—I swear by them. I use them on both heads. I may use one *Muff'l* on my snare drum on the top—just a little bit of it, because I still want the projection. That's it. The toms are wide open.

WFM: What about electronic drums? You stayed away from them for a while.

BC: Now I'm heavily into them, because I found a way to make it work in collaboration with what I do live with my acoustic set. My set triggers the electronics.

WFM: You're not going to be up on stage with Simmons pads?

BC: Oh no. There may be a Simmons head—an interface that I'll stick all the microphones through, come through the board, go stereo into that, and boom—get some kind of sound out front that will be on top of what I do, for an effect. That's it.

WFM: You keep yourself pretty fit, and it's obvious that you lift weights. I've read stories about you doing 400 sit-ups a day. Does that sort of thing help your drumming?

BC: Oh sure. It helps me from a health standpoint. To play with the intensity I want to night after night on a long tour, I have to keep fit. Also, those long flights to Europe and Japan can really take it out of you if you're not together.

WFM: Do you ever feel the need to play outside the jazz/funk thing you're known for? Does it ever get to the point where you want to get back to your roots and play straight ahead? Do you ever get the chance to do that?

BC: Rarely do I ever get the chance to play straight ahead, and I don't feel the need to. I feel that art form is a part of me and it always will be. But the problem with playing straight ahead is that you can't earn a living doing it. There is very little calling right now on a large-scale basis for playing straight ahead. That whole genre will always be with me even when I'm playing something, let's say, more rock oriented. I might still phrase something or play a lick that comes from that whole style. The knowledge and experience I've had with that genre adds more depth to my playing in any style.

WFM: Could you talk about the recent thing with Mahavishnu? Why did the reunion fall short?

BC: The Mahavishnu reunion didn't work out, because the idea was to get everybody together from the old band. I was misled

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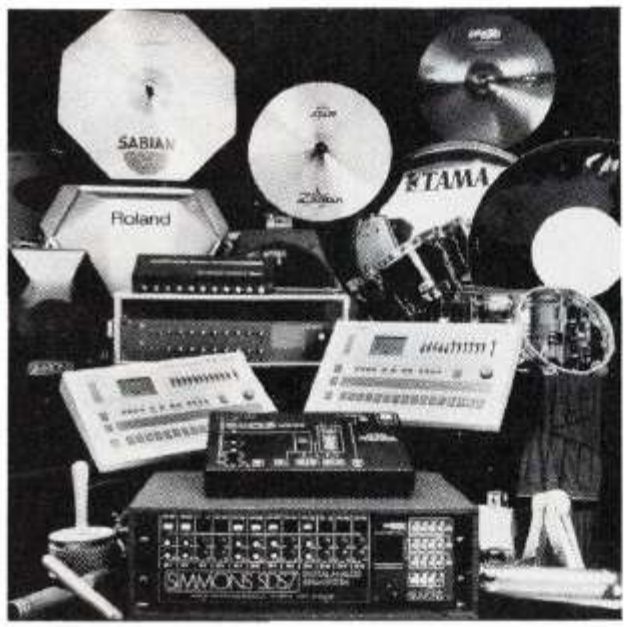

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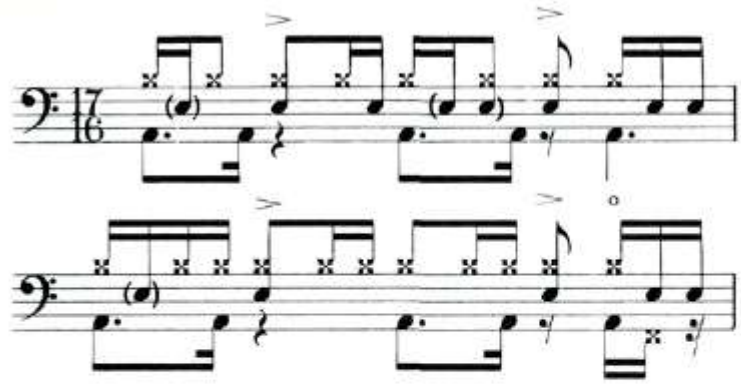
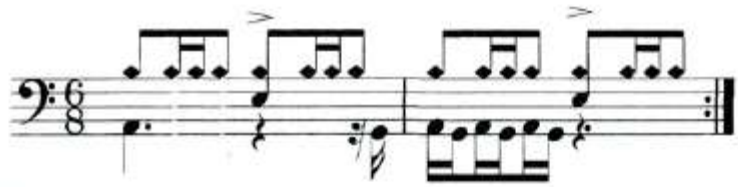
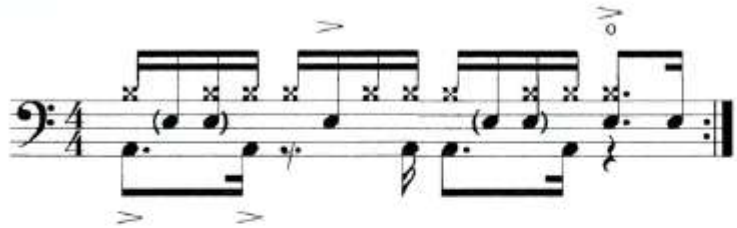
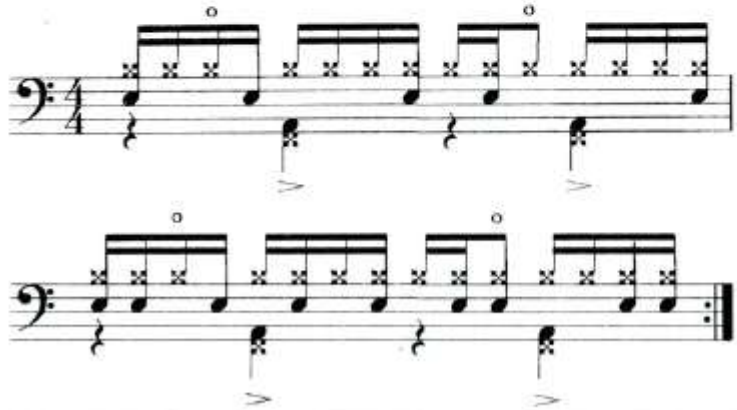
Cobham On Record continued from page 21

5. "Spanish Moss"—Billy Cobham; *Crosswinds,* Atlantic SD 7300, recorded 1974. This is the basic pattern in 17/16, which Billy stretches out on. He makes the odd meter flow.

6. "Lunarputions"—Billy Cobham; *Total Eclipse,* Atlantic 18121, recorded 1974. Here is an interesting little funk groove.

7. "Juicy"—Billy Cobham & George Duke Band; *Live On Tour In Europe,* Atlantic SD 18194, recorded 1976. Billy's drumming on this live album is very exciting, and on this cut, he demonstrates his double bass drum coordination.

8. "Anteres The Star"—Billy Cobham; *Magic,* Columbia JC 34939, recorded 1977. This funk pattern complements the tune perfectly.

9. "Indigo"—Billy Cobham; *Simplicity Of Thought, Depth Of Expression,* Columbia JC 35457, recorded 1978. This cut reveals Billy's tasteful side, with his flowing approach to this reggae feel.

quite frankly, but not without it being partially my fault. I really wanted it to happen so badly that I was willing to really push and shove to make it happen, because I felt that the time was better than right for it all logo.

WFM: Did McLaughlin just want to rope you in?

BC: I don't know if he wanted to rope me in or not, but I felt that he needed to use my services, and the capacity that he wanted me to work in was as a sideman to support his material. Even though he put his best foot forward, which may not have been a very big one, to allow me to write a piece of music for the project, I didn't get the feeling that my material or my thoughts on that particular level were needed. I learned my lesson, and I know that I'll never do that again. That's something that I would have loved to have done, and I paid a major price for it by finding out that sometimes you just can't make things happen the way you want them to. If people don't want to do things with you, you're going to get the short end of the stick. That's all there is to it.

WFM: So now you lead.

BC: I have my band to write for. When the original Mahavishnu Orchestra was together, I would have loved to have said, "Well, I'd like to contribute as a writer." One of the reasons why that band was disbanded was primarily because everybody, including myself, felt slighted. I felt like we were doing so well that it would have been great for all the minds to come together and develop stuff together, because I not only had respect for the music that John McLaughlin wrote, but I had respect for the material that Jan, Jerry, and Rick wrote. It made me rebel and write the album that became *Spectrum.* I really wanted to write for the original orchestra. I tried to do that again with the new orchestra, but nothing had changed. I know that one of the things that turned the other guys off to doing it was the fact that they couldn't come in with material. They couldn't contribute.

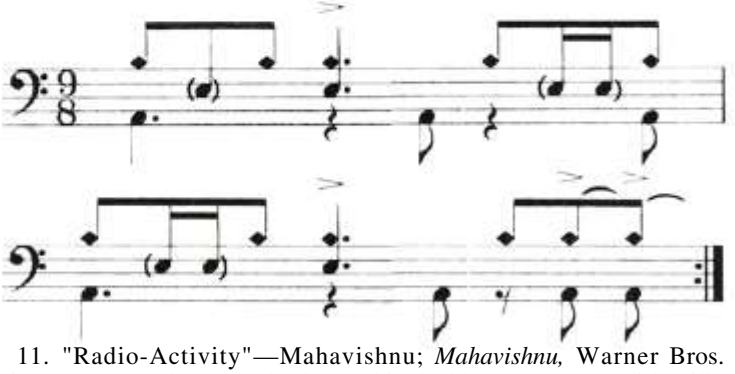
WFM: They would have been just sidemen.

BC: Yeah, and that was unfair. They didn't want to be people who supported John McLaughlin's musical situation. They wanted to be looked upon as his equals, and I think that was only fair. He didn't want to do it, so that was only fair.

WFM: As for your own career, you have put out an album a year since the original Mahavishnu Orchestra broke up, and when you didn't, you've been involved in a major project. How do you account for such longevity? Some people just go away after a couple of albums. You're consistent year after year.

BC: Well, I like to try to contribute to the music scene. This is my life, and I want to be involved. I like to work with people, too. I like to be a supporter, as I've been mostly throughout my career, but I like to have one situation where I can say, "This is mine. This is something that I do. This is how I feel. This is stuff that I write for myself. This is my recording deal. These are people that I employ to project my ideas." So I do.

10. "Observations & Reflections"—Billy Cobham; *Observations &,* Elektra Musician El-60123, recorded 1982. Here, Billy plays a shuffle in three, written in 9/8.



11. "Radio-Activity"—Mahavishnu; *Mahavishnu,* Warner Bros. 25190-1, recorded 1984. Check out this double-bass pattern with Billy playing a snare drum ride pattern on top.

12. "Come Join Me"—Billy Cobham; *Warning,* GRP-A-1020, recorded 1985. This example is from the 11/16 bridge section of the tune.

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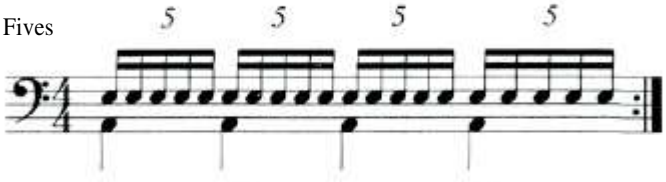
by Peter Magadini

Polyrhythms And Soloing

In last month's issue of MD, Joe Morello discussed the use of polyrhythmic clusters for hand development. In this column, the same groupings that Mr. Morello explained will be applied to soloing on the drums. If you missed last month's *Strictly Technique,* be sure to check it out.

In the following exercises, you will develop a basic understanding and feel for the odd polyrhythms. Once you have mastered these on the drums, move on to the next section.

Fives



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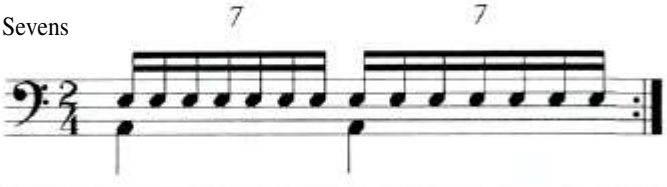
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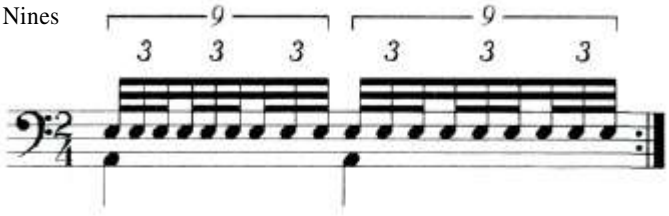

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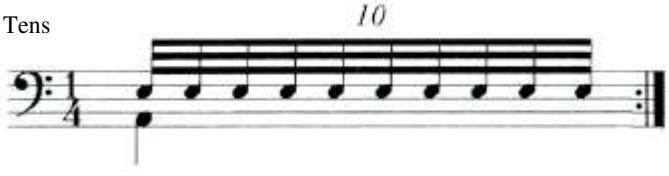
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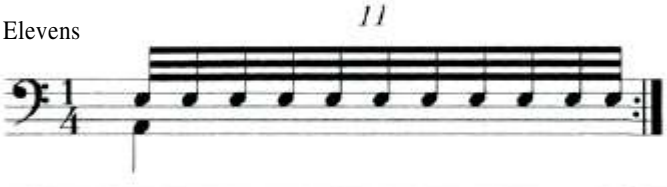
For the following solos, play each on the snare drum with the bass drum and hi-hat underneath. Play these slowly at first. If you are having difficulty with the rhythms, practice the hands separately with a metronome. After you are comfortable with the rhythms, improvise them around the entire set, using toms, cymbals, etc.

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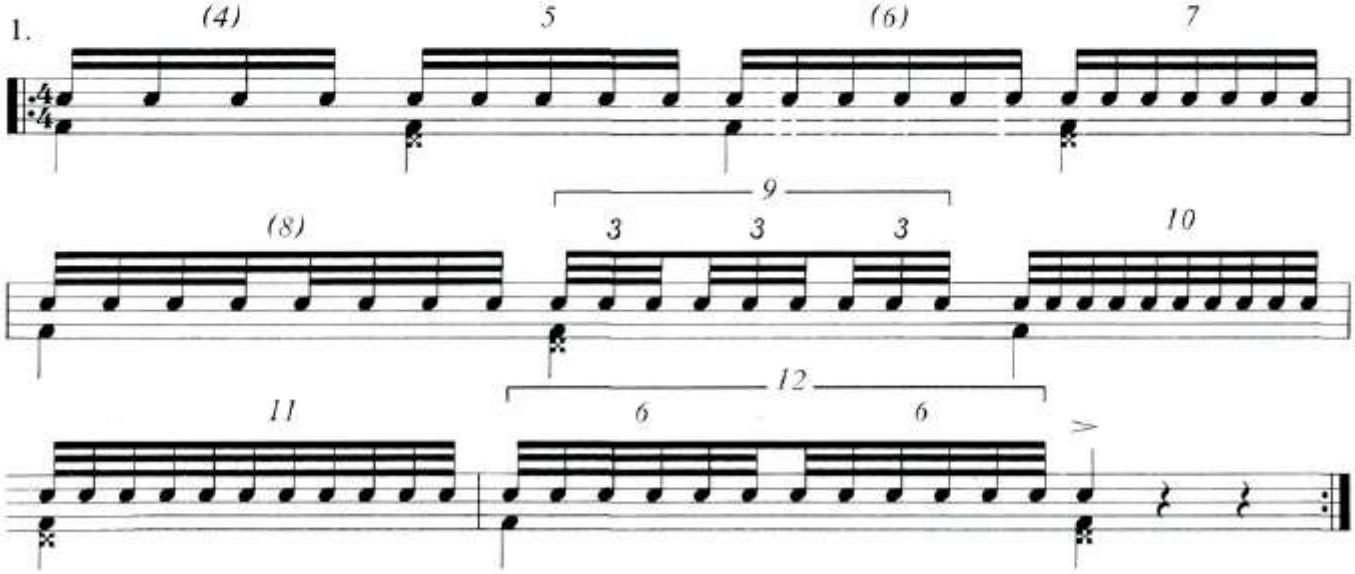
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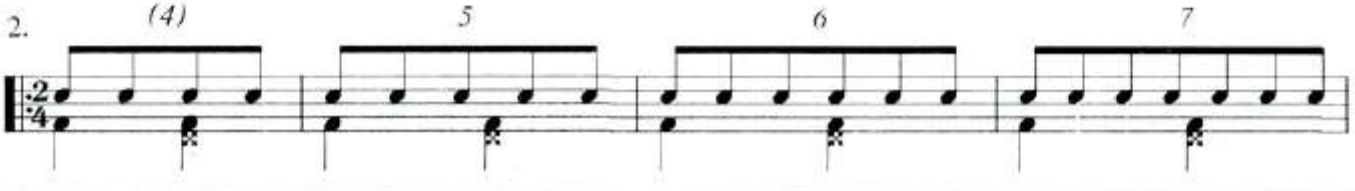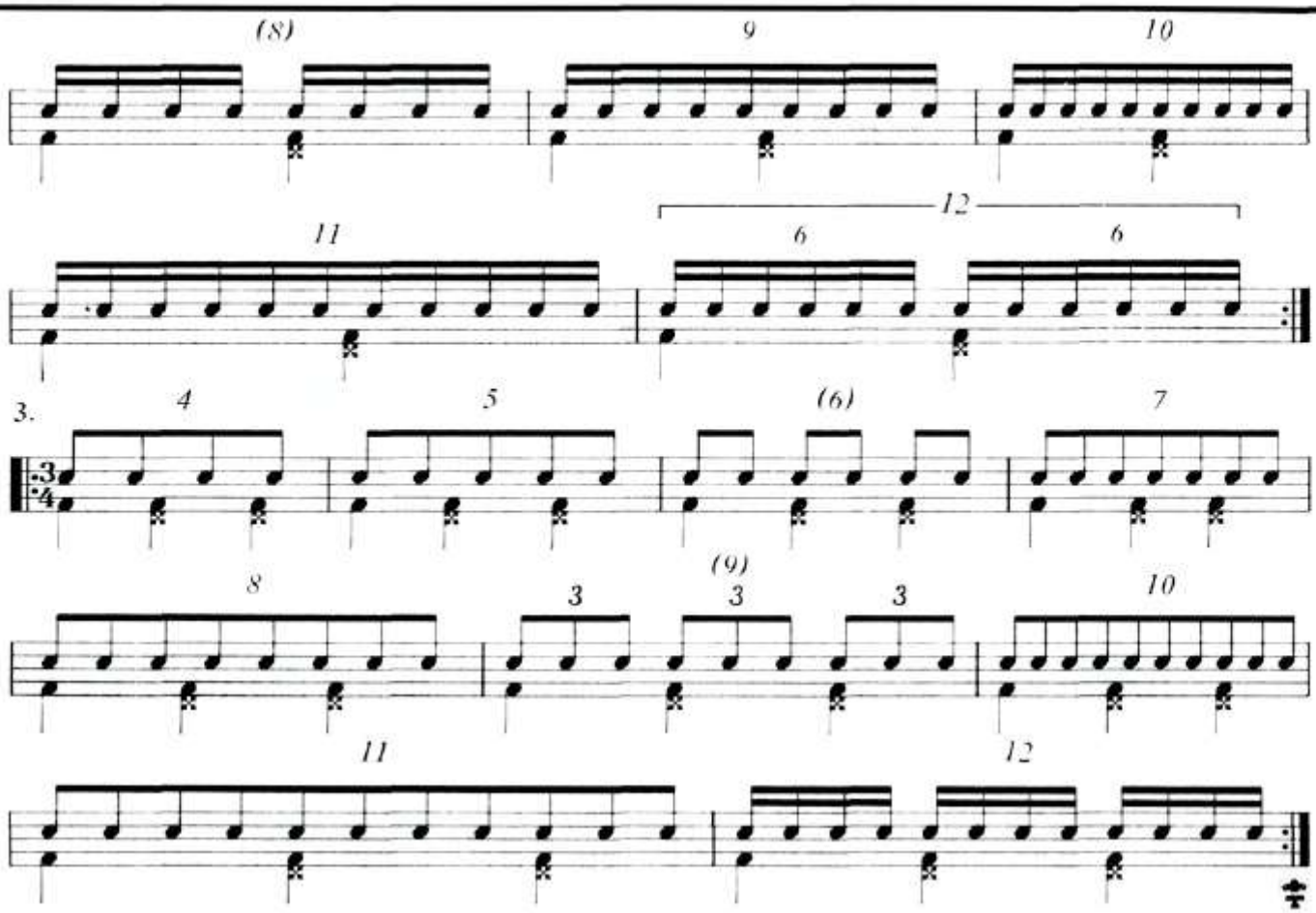
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Creative Refinishing

by Douglas A. Smith

Photo by J.R. Waltz

A mismatched drumset can be made not only to match, but to look as unique as your individual playing style sounds. This article is intended not so much as a "how to" guide but, rather, to demonstrate what can be done with spray paint, masking tape, and a little imagination. Hopefully, your own creativity will be stimulated by reading about one of the many possibilities this process allows.

The pictured Gretsch drumset consists of four originally mismatched drums that were refinished over a period of about two weeks. The snare drum is actually a Premier shell that was refitted with Gretsch hardware. The 9x13 mounted tom-tom started life as a single-headed concert tom with a black plastic finish. (A bearing edge was cut on the bottom, and appropriate hardware was added.) Both the 20" bass drum and the 16" floor tom were covered with faded, blue pearl plastic.

All the plastic covering was stripped and the entire set outfitted with more contemporary hardware. I stuck to Gretsch parts when availability and finances permitted.

The project was started almost as a joke. I began with the snare drum, which *had* to be refinished in order to cover the holes left over from when the lug casings were changed. Creative impulses can come from anywhere; the original idea for a checkerboard pattern may have come from a box of Purina *Cat Chow.* The drum turned out so well that I decided to do a whole set in that motif, slightly varying each drum to keep it interesting.

The condition of the stripped shell is very important to the final outcome of the finish. All hardware changes—holes to be filled or drilled—were considered *before* the refinishing process was begun. Air vent grommets invariably had to be replaced, since the act of removing them is destructive. (For more information on removing the plastic and preparing the shell, see the article I wrote in the June, '82 issue of *MD,* along with articles by Pat Foley [May '84] and David Creamer [Dec. '84].)

Once the shell was ready, the first step was the application of gray primer paint. Two coats were used; the first was sanded, and a fine grade of steel wool ("OOO") was used on the second.

The choice of color is a vital part of any design or finish. Because my design was on the busy side, I chose a simple color scheme: black and white. In general, as the design gets more complex, fewer colors should be used. It makes no sense for someone to have to stand three feet away to appreciate the finish.

Gloss acrylic spray paints were used on the set throughout, and the first color applied over the primer was white, because any following colors would easily cover it. The paint had to dry thoroughly before the masking process could be started.

Masking tape is made for this operation; that's how it got its name. It won't pull dry paint up when removed and win maintain a clean, masked edge, if used carefully. The tape was applied to the areas that were to *remain* white. This technique required some backward logic, which could have become very entangled had more than two simple colors been used. The areas *not* to be painted had to be considered just as much as those that *were* to be painted. So, with deliberate thought, the tape was stuck in a criss-cross fashion around the drum.

The most painstaking and time-consuming step was next. Where the strips of tape intersected, the overlapping areas were carefully cut out using an *X-acto* modeling knife, leaving a checkerboard of white paint and masking tape. Care had to be taken to keep all the lines straight and true, and not to push too hard on the blade (thereby cutting into the underlying white paint). The edge of the freshly cut tape was then pushed down, using a dust-free rag so as not to get finger oils on the exposed paint that was to be painted over.

When that was done, the black paint was sprayed on. Although the black easily covered the white, two light coats were used instead of one heavy coat to avoid running. It was applied, for the sake of consistency, as if the entire shell was to be painted black and the tape didn't exist.

The masking tape was removed when the paint was dry to the touch, but before it had thoroughly set. That way, the risk of pulling up any paint with the tape was minimized. At this point, the complete design could be seen.

After the black paint had been allowed to dry fully, clear gloss urethane was sprayed on. It took several coats to smooth over the edges of the overlying black paint completely. Fine steel wool was again used between the applications. Finally, a polishing compound, found in auto shops and hardware stores, was used to bring up the gloss of the final coat of urethane.

Before reassembling the kit, I took advantage of the opportunity to clean and polish all the hardware and pack the lug casings with felt to reduce sympathetic ringing in the springs. The final results were greater than I expected; I haven't played one gig since where someone from the audience hasn't commented favorably on the drums. A drummer even asked me once where I bought the set and what company made that finish. With a self-congratulatory air, I said, "I did it myself." *That* is the joy of having a personally customized drumset.

The point is: Use your imagination on that old mismatched drumset. Many colors of paint and many widths of masking tape are available. If you are new to the craft, go to your local library and look up books on refinishing; go through back issues of *Modern Drummer,* and study up on refinishing and shell-maintenance techniques. Start with one drum, rather than tearing your whole kit apart and then finding you're in too deep. As your ability increases, you'll find it possible to have a number of drums at different stages of the refinishing process. The most important element of any refinishing procedure, however, is patience. A hurried job will undoubtedly look like just that—hurried.

Customizing your own drumset creates a confidence in your instrument like nothing else can; you become familiar with every nut, bolt, washer, lug casing, and shell. Best of all, when someone asks about that great finish, you can proudly say, "I did it myself."

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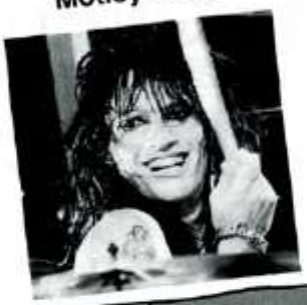

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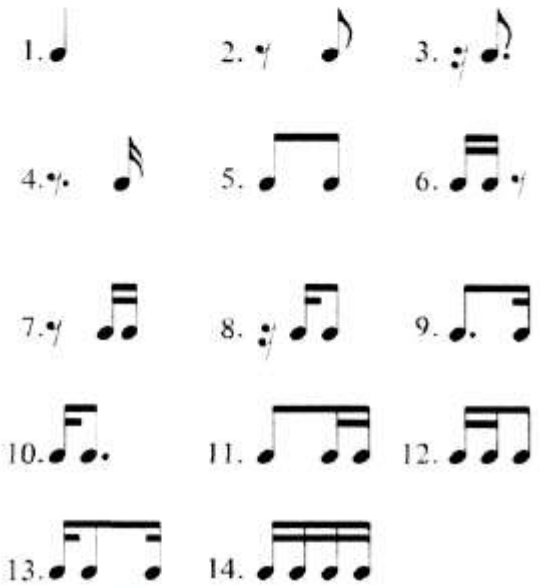
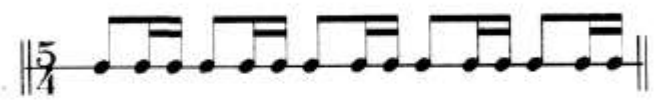
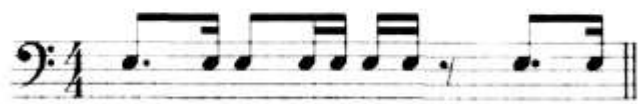
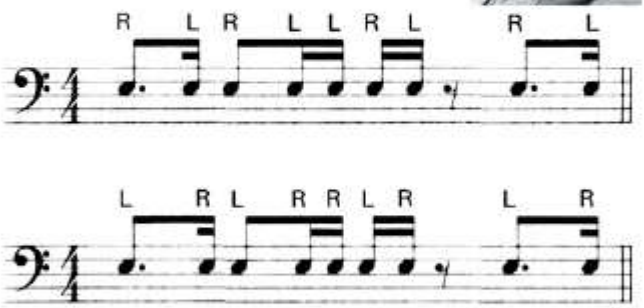
by Ed Soph

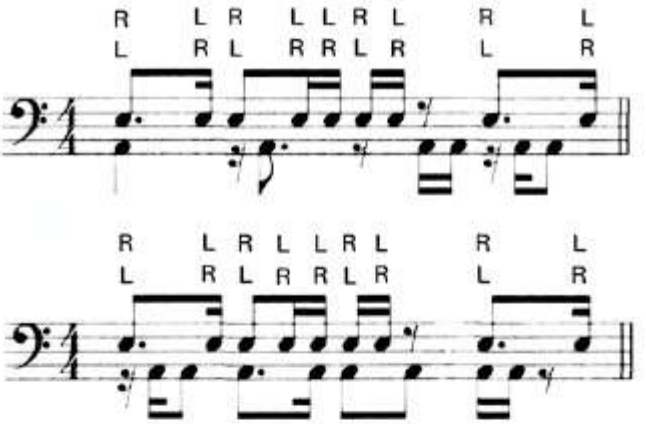
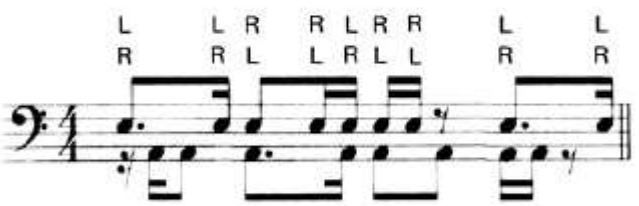
Creating Your Own Funk And Fusion Patterns

Photo by Veryl Oakland

The following system will help you develop your own "licks" and patterns. It will sharpen your rhythmic writing and reading skills, and it will develop your talent as an improviser.

The first step is to become familiar with these rhythmic "components":

Learn each of the components by playing them individually. Since they are presented in one-beat partials, you may put them together in any time signature. For example:

Use these stickings with the individual components: (1) all left hand; (2) all right hand; (3) alternate, beginning with the left; and (4) alternate, beginning with the right hand. Be sure to use a metronome to ensure steady time.

The next step is to create your own pattern by combining any of the components as you wish. For example:

Now, we can devise a sticking for the pattern. Put the right hand on all downbeats and the left hand on all other notes. Then, put the left hand on all the downbeats and the right on any other notes.

Become comfortable with both of these stickings.

Now we are ready to add a bass drum line. This, too, is your creation. You may play the bass in unison with any notes of the snare pattern, or you may use any of the components to fill in subdivisions of the snare pattern. Here are some examples:

The next step is to move the right hand to the hi-hat (or cowbell, or ride), while the left hand remains on the snare. Reverse this step: left hand to hi-hat (cowbell, ride) and right hand on snare. Devise your own stickings, too. Here's an example with the same combination of components:

Once the basic pattern feels good, play drums other than the snare, or alternate the cymbal rhythm between the hi-hat and cowbell. Experiment with accents and rimshots, and use your imagination.

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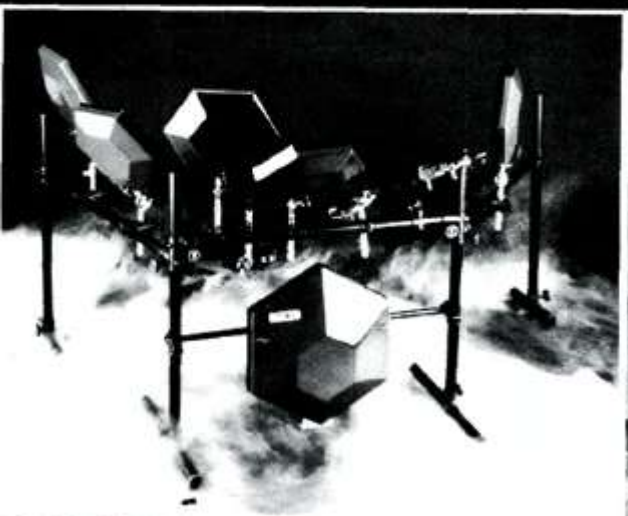

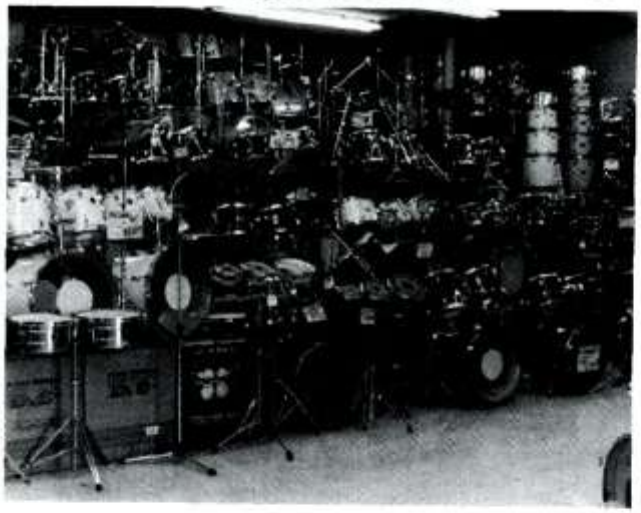

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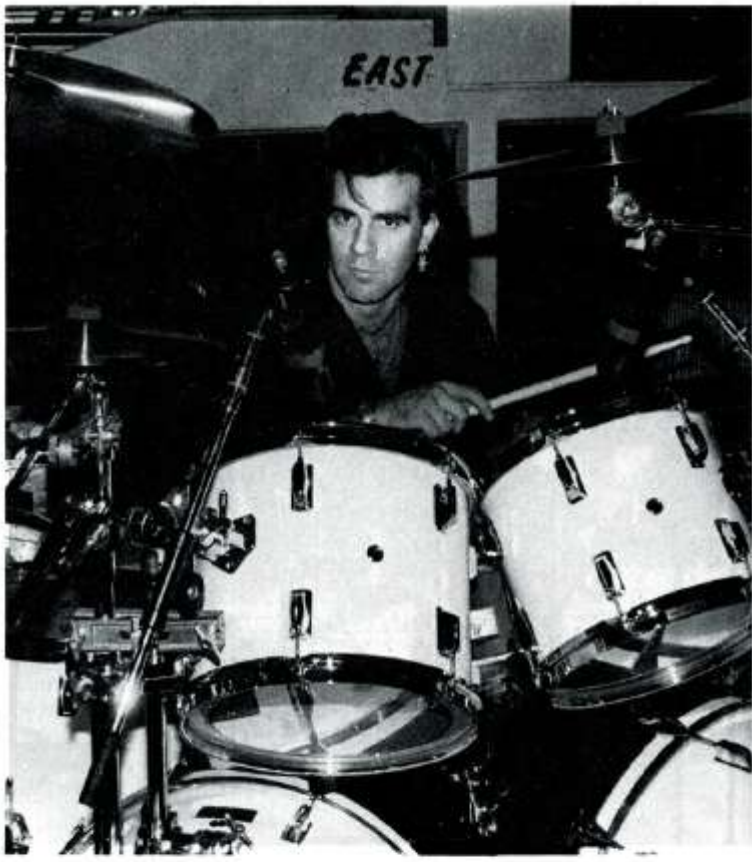

Torres continued from page 25

to sign us, but we ended up going with PolyGram.

TS: I remember first hearing about Bon Jovi back in the summer of '83 when the band won a New York radio contest.

TT: Jon had recorded a demo of "Runaway," which had been played for me and was what initially intrigued me before I joined the band. Not only did the rest of the songs sound good to me, but Jon also had some great guys playing with him. That original demo, which was put together about nine months before Jon and I met, won the WAPP-FM contest. The radio station put "Runaway" on a compilation album with the other winning bands, and sent it around to radio stations all over the country. That generated a lot of interest, and it made record companies check it out. About two months after we were signed, we played the Garden, opening for ZZ Top. We went in there with our baby equipment. It was a joke, but that's how we started.

TS: The band spent nine months in '84 and ten months in '85 out on the road. Considering your background, has playing a similar format every night for months at a stretch directly affected your playing in any way?

TT: The first thing that I've noticed, since we had to do without soundchecks being the supporting band, is that I don't really get the time I'd like to have to fiddle around with my drumset. Also, you're only allotted a limited time on stage, and you don't really get to flex those muscles in another direction drumming-wise, so you do get stale.

I remember there were a few times on this tour when I rented a studio, put a drumset in the middle of it, went in there for six hours, and just played for myself. I just went in to loosen up the muscles and to try out some new things. I also try to jam whenever I can when I'm on the road. After a show, I'll go out and find a club to play in just for some kind of change. But being on the road can make you stale. That's why, when I get off the road, I try to play in a different element. For me, that's the hardest thing to tolerate on the road, you know, beyond being away from my family. *Being away* speaks for itself. It's a hard life. But as far as chops go, it's a battle to keep them because there's really no time.

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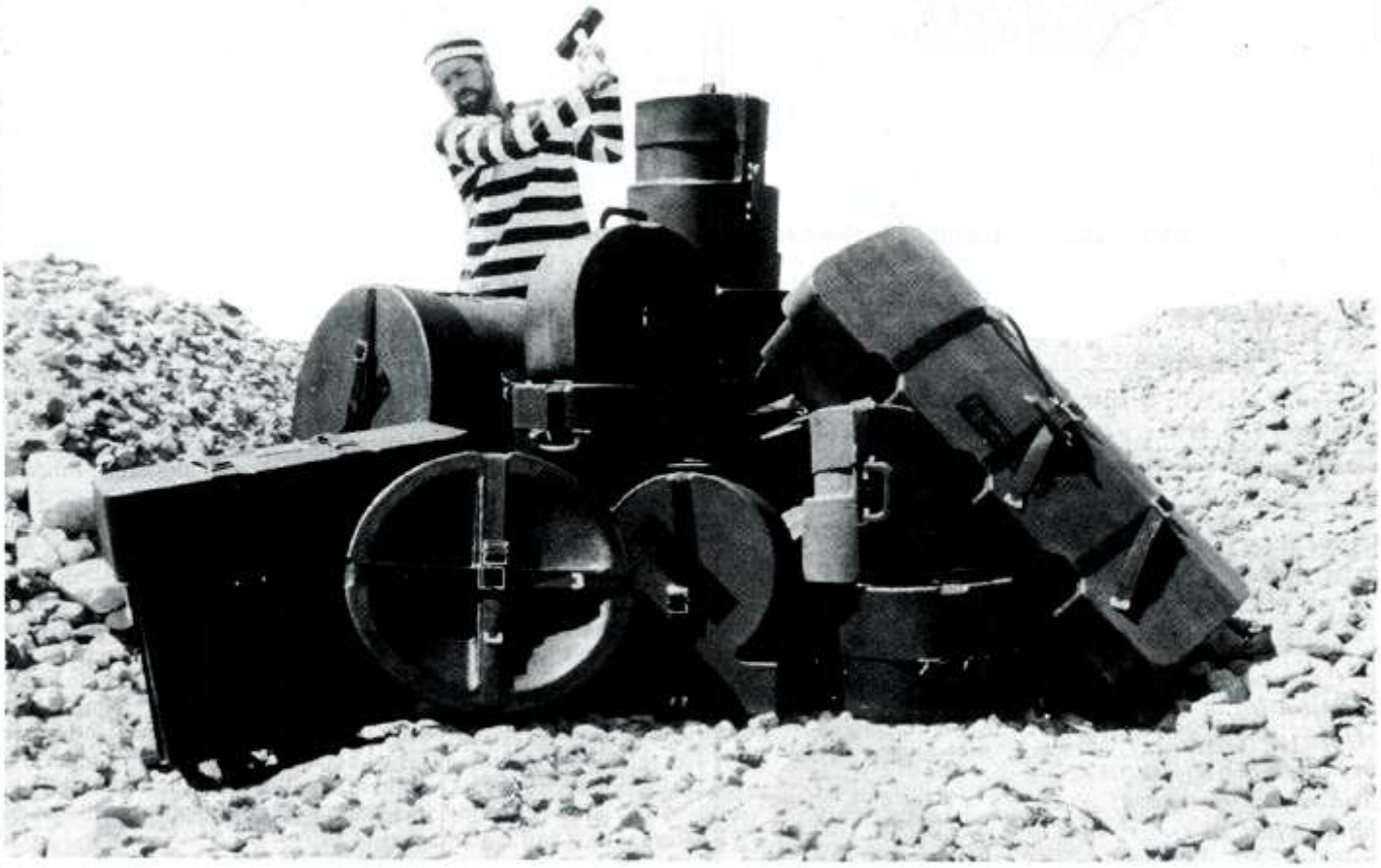

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For the shows themselves, I keep things fresh by not getting worked up until about half an hour before the lights go down. I'll warm up, but not extensively. I'll do slow hits, one at a time in slow motion, to stretch the muscles. When the lights go down, the adrenaline starts to pump, and I'm thinking that there are drummers out there, musicians, fans—people who love music and people who live it.

TS: How do you keep in such good shape? You seem pretty fit for someone who's on the road so much.

TT: I work on my abdominal muscles. Almost every drummer has a lower-back problem due to posture, and sit-ups are the worst things to do, because not only are they bad for your back, but they only work 30% of your abs.

I do abdominal exercises from a course called Abs For Life, which is for weight lifters and martial artists. It breaks down every muscle in your abdomen, so you work each muscle separately. This method really works to strengthen the muscles that support the lower back. Drummers should work out their stomach muscles, because when they're playing, they're using all their limbs with the exception of the stomach muscles. So if they work on their abs correctly, they're going to help keep some of those lower-back pains away.

Basically, it's pretty simple stuff: laying on your back placing both hands under your pelvis—sit on your hands—you lift your head forward and do leg raises from six to ten inches. Do about 20 repetitions of these, stop, and then do 20 more. That *totally* works your abdomen. I do these for six minutes a day, three times a week. You'll feel a difference within two months, and you'll have a stomach that's as hard as a rock. This will help you later on, because after sitting on a drum stool for years, back pains are almost inevitable.

A lot of people don't stress the fact that with drumming there are physical ailments involved, and some can be serious. Posture was always a problem for me. I was always slouching over the drums, smoking a cigarette, but I'm getting a little better now. I'm more aware that taking care of myself is the key to longevity. I mean, you can't play drums out of a hospital bed.

TS: Getting back to Bon Jovi, does the band function democratically in the sense that everyone contributes to the shaping of the music?

TT: We all write in this band, and our next album will be even more of a band effort. On the first record, I worked on the bridge on "She Don't Know Me," and on *7800° Fahrenheit,* I contributed parts to "Only Lonely," and I wrote the title, added some melodies, and contributed some of the verses to "Secret Dreams." By the way, that song started out as a jam. Richie Sambora and I were in the studio one day. I started playing, he came in on guitar, and we just layed it down. Another thing I'm heavy into is arranging, as well as being melody oriented. I try to do things that will make a bridge or a chorus stand out.

TS: On "(I Don't Wanna Fall) Into The Fire" from 7800° *Fahrenheit,* it sounds like you layered some African-type rhythms down.

TT: The song started out like a war dance, so as I approached it, I played it in that kind of rhythm. We changed the song around, got a pulse happening, and layered the toms over that pulse. If anything, that's an influence from Phil Collins. That tune gave us the chance to get that rawness—that tribal feeling. We started out in 3/4 in there and went to 4/4.

TS: You and Richie Sambora [guitar] play off each other's accents really well. In fact, on a track like "Shot Through The Heart" from *Bon Jovi,* you work together so tightly that it's hard to distinguish who's following *who.*

TT: Actually, we're following each other. [smiles] We're trading off. I call that the "warm air." It's something that happens when you don't have to look at the other musician. I *feel* where he's going. I pick up on that and play with him. I elaborate on it. Then he'll catch the other side of it and take it out from there. That's the beauty of working with someone you can lock in with. That's also why you need the "big ears" to listen to what's going on. I also try to tap into the creative sources. I'm big on creativity. Of course,

keeping good time is the most important thing, and good timing is what keeps the band together.

TS: Have you ever noticed that there seems to be a special relationship between drummers and singers—I'm referring to a live situation—where both seem to rely on each other's presence, cues, and hand signals?

TT: I noticed that myself, and maybe it's because choreography has something to do with it. When singers bring down their hands, you've got to watch them and stop with them, just like James Brown would make those fast cuts. As I'm playing, I'm watching Jon like a hawk; when he dives off the top of a trussrod, by the time he hits the ground, I'm going to hit and start a rhythm. You have to do your crescendos with the vocals, too, and when it comes to doing a passage into a chorus, you have to play it so that the chorus is brought out. Basically, you're interweaving your playing with the vocalist to enhance the singing.

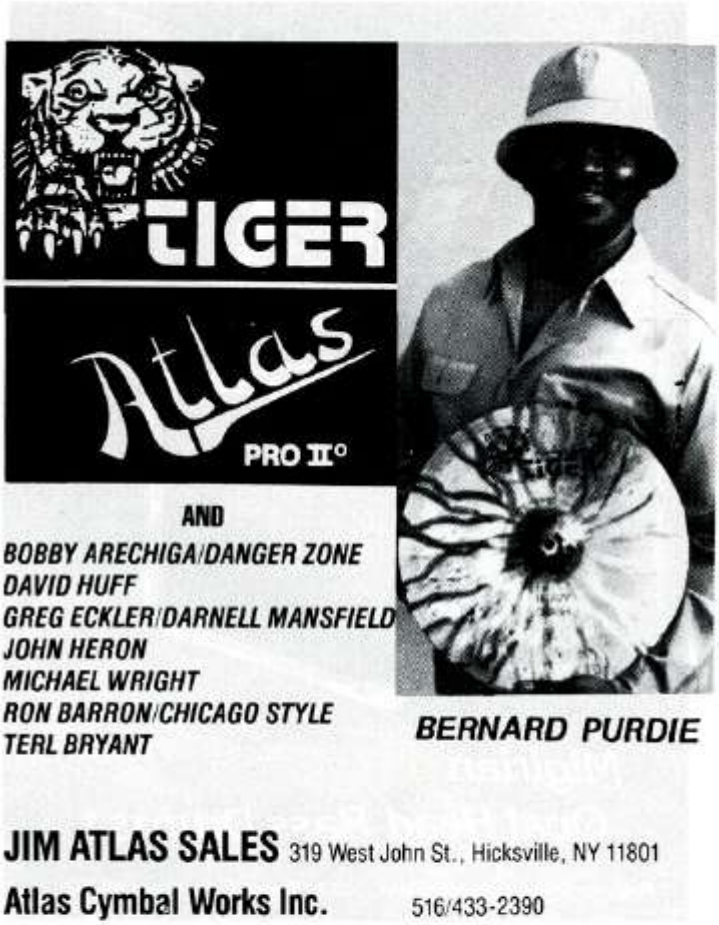
TS: We were talking about working in the studio a minute ago. Are there any little special effects that you implement to get the optimum sounds that you want to create?

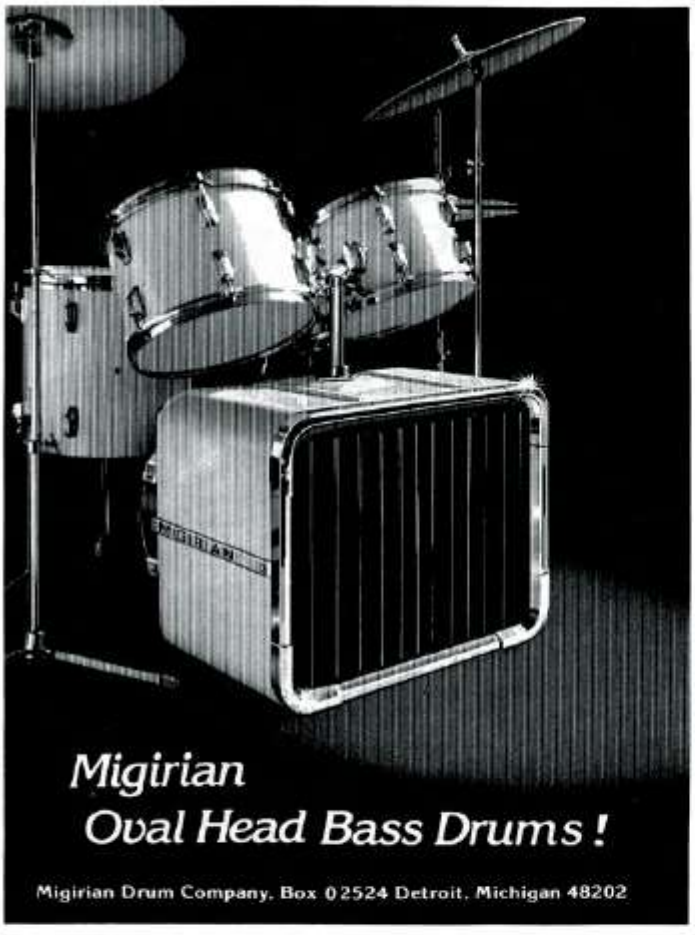
TT: As far as electronics go, in the studio I sometimes like to beef up my sounds by MIDI-ing and triggering the *LinnDrum* or Simmons with an acoustic drum. I combine the two together to get sort of a different twist. This can be helpful when you're working in a small studio and you're trying to get the ambient sound of a big room for your drums. By combining the acoustics and the electronics, it helps to make the drums in a smaller room sound better.

I've always been into Shelly Manne, who was a great drummer, because he had an amazing way with *sounds.* Listening to old records, I learned how to do the trick where you wet your finger and rub it over a head like the conga players do to get a sound that's similar to an electric drum. On records, I also like to use mic' stands with keys taped to them or a stand-up ashtray for effects.

TS: How did you ever come up with the idea to use an ashtray to produce an effect?

TT: Usually, there's an ashtray laying around the studio. I hit it





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once, and it went "crash." It sounded great, so I used it on a record where the group I was in did a rendition of the Beatles' "She's A Woman." I used a combination of tom-toms, a cowbell, and the ashtray. It was great. Together they sounded like a real effect. On the *7800°* album, I used a metal ashtray.

TS: You didn't sample the sound through a sampling machine? You just hit the ashtray and it went straight through the sound board that way?

TT: I didn't sample it. I had it next to me, put a mic' close by, and just hit it. In fact, I used it on "Tokyo Road." You see, I love doing stuff like that, and by acquiring more electronic equipment, I can program those kinds of sounds and use them whenever I want to.

I still have my trap cases full of junk. People look into them and ask, "What's that?" I love using just about anything to get sounds.

TS: Like the pliers.

TT: [laughs] I guess that's where it stems from. I think everything is a potential instrument, too. Just looking around this room, I can see a lot of objects that I could get some great sounds out of.

TS: So you appreciate *sounds* themselves?

TT: I love sounds. That's why sampling is great. It allows you to store the sounds that you want to use. But I'll probably always use my case of junk. Some people use wheels, brake drums, and a lot of percussion for sound effects. I also like to use wind chimes and wind machines, which I make myself.

TS: What about your thoughts on the electronic aspects of drumming?

TT: It's obvious that electronic instruments are here to stay. When electronic drums first came in, I wasn't sure if they were going to fit in, but they've managed to fit in well, and they've added a completely new texture. I find that a lot of drummers are starting to do sessions with electric drumsets. The drummers are finally starting to catch up with the technology. I remember not too long ago when it was the keyboard players who had to spend ten grand every so often on new equipment to keep up with the technology, so that they *could play* sessions. Now drummers are also expected to stay current with the technology. You can't fight it anymore. This is the age of the computer, and you have to keep up with it.

TS: Do you have a natural affinity for working with electronics?

TT: You know, I'm beginning to get better at it. I'm catching up to it all. I'm probably one of the less knowledgeable drummers on this subject, because whenever I did use electronics in the studio, I'd have to hire somebody to come in with the equipment. Now I'm acquiring my own set of electronic gizmos to play with.

TS: Speaking of equipment, could you please give a detailed description of the most current kit that you've been using on tour?

TT: I use a Pearl kit with two 22" bass drums; two rack toms: 12" and 13"; 16" and 18" floor toms; and a 14" brass-shell floating snare. As far as cymbals go, I have two *China Types*—an 18" and a 20", an 18" medium crash, two 20" crashes, a 16" crash, a 7" splash, and a 22" heavy ride—all Paiste.

With equipment, I've found that hardware and a good shell are just about everything. I endorse Pearl hardware because I believe in the product, and since I beat the hell out of my drums, I need hardware that will withstand the abuse, which the Pearl hardware does. It also holds up to the roadies and the union people who handle it.

I like using 22" bass drums, because I think you can get any type of sound you want out of that size drum. You don't have to go any bigger because you're just dispersing more air, and it's not going to give you a much deeper tone. Size only makes a difference when you're playing acoustically, but since mic's are always used these days, why not get the maximum effect out of a smaller drum and utilize the air ratio in there?

My equipment has gone through a lot of changes since I started out. When I bought my first kit back in the early days, it was a huge, 1969 Ludwig set, and I was in my glory. That was during the heyday of Ginger Baker, and it was cool to use a million drums. I used that set for a lot of different things, but at some point, I

started to sort of trim off a lot of drums. I've acquired a lot of drumsets over the years. I've got about nine right now, and my basement looks like a drum junkyard. I went from using a double-bass kit to a single, and then back again. I had switched to a single bass drum setup when I started playing a lot of jazz, and found that I could do a lot with just one bass drum, plus I had wanted to work with the hi-hat and bass drum interaction.

I switched back to double bass for live gigs this year, because I wanted to have a little extra something for fills. I try to work out some interesting patterns, and I like mixing things around. Let's say you've got a pattern that's written for the left hand and the right foot. I'd take that pattern and reverse it, so that the left hand would play the right foot's part and vice versa. Just mix and match limbs. That's something that Gary Chester teaches. What you're doing with that is looking at a piece of music in a totally different manner, and you can look at that piece in a variety of ways, depending on which limbs you want to switch. So now you've got to keep time, read, and also reverse your pattern around, which can really help to improve your independence.

TS: How do you go about miking your kit?

TT: For live shows it's pretty basic: I'm using double-headed drums and Sennheiser *421's.* I use them on all the toms, too. I use a Shure 57on the snare, both top and bottom. In the studio, my mic' setup is pretty similar to the live one, except I may be using single heads—depending on the type of track I'm doing—and in the studio, I go for more intensity from my drums. Sometimes I'll put another bass drum in front of my usual bass drum, with both open ends facing each other and a mic' inside of each drum so that the sound reverberates. It gives a special ambience to the sound.

TS: I noticed on the track "Breakout" [from *Bon Jovi]* that during the bridge, your tom-toms are tuned very deep. They could mistakenly be distinguished as bass drums.

TT: On that track, I tuned the toms really low. We had cut that LP at the Power Station where the rooms are great for getting a big drum sound, so I was able to achieve the effects I wanted.

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Instead of adding a lot of synthetic sounds from the mixing boards, I try to get my sounds by tuning the drums themselves to the desired effect. If the drum sound is great to begin with when it goes onto the tape, then your result will be a strong basic track that will also sound great. You can always spice it up later with synthetics, but the natural sound should be good to begin with. I've seen a lot of engineers go in and completely change a drum sound by synthetic means, because they couldn't make the drum sound good in the room itself. That's twice the work, and you're also not really getting the full spectrum or the full benefits from that *drum.*

You also shouldn't go to an extreme with tuning. Sometimes you can tune the drums so far away from the dominant note in the song or the main chorus line that you end up being out of tune with that chorus line, throwing the whole song off key.

TS: So how do you tune with consideration to that?

TT: Well, it comes down to rehearsing and pre-production. I bring my own tape machine into our pre-productions to listen to what I'm doing and to get the tone down. I'll listen to the lead vocal on the lead music line. For a song like "She Don't Know Me," I played notes that matched the lead vocal notes. It enhances the sound.

TS: In respect to live tuning, do you have the assistance of a drum roadie?

TT: I've got an excellent guy by the name of Jeff Tarbell. He used to work with Bobby Rondinelli, and he's also Chuck Burgi's roadie. Like I said, since we don't get soundchecks when we're touring, I may tweak my heads during the set a little bit—give the lugs a little turn here and there.

Jeff studied me for about two weeks in the beginning, so he knows the way I tune. I just match each lug directly across from the one I'm working on, going all the way around. In the studio, I'll concentrate on just one lug, because just a little turn to the left or right will make a noticeable difference inside the room. Live, you're working with a lot of monitor sounds, so you tune to the monitors. If there's a certain feedback you're hearing, you try to

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tune it out. If you can't get it out of the equalizer underneath the board, you have to do it manually, but Jeffs really good at that, too.

In the studio I tune all my own drums, and when I have the chance, I'll tune them before a show, but Jeffs a great help because I often have to rely on him since we don't get soundchecks. Working practically every day, playing just about every night for ten months, you need somebody on your side like Jeff who has the time to get everything right. I can just walk on stage, and I know my kit will be perfect.

Another thing to stress is that tuning is really important when playing sessions. You're running into the studio, and you usually have between 20 minutes and a half an hour to do your rhythm track and to get it *right.* Time is money. The engineer and the person who's paying for the session don't have time to wait around. So if you go in there ahead of time and tune your drums properly, you can knock off the session quickly, and you're happy, the engineer's happy—everybody's happy. Proper tuning, to some drummers, is as crucial as good timekeeping. There are also a lot of drummers who don't really stress the importance of tuning.

TS: Considering that your background consists of working in a variety of areas, do you see yourself playing in Bon Jovi well into the future? Does a permanent situation offer you the challenges you require?

TT: I see Bon Jovi getting bigger in the future. I definitely see a lot of possibilities for this band. As far as I'm concerned, there's a challenge in playing *period,* and if this band becomes even more successful, it's not going to hurt me in any way. In Bon Jovi, I'm playing with a strong amount of intensity. I grab those drums and squeeze every last drop out of them—every sound. And playing to a huge audience every night presents a real challenge.

To me, all music is relevant. If I can walk away from a gig or from doing an album feeling satisfied about it, whether the music is obscure *or* internationally known—as long as I think it's a good piece of music—then I'm happy.

Jeff Porcaro

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Foot Pedal Technique

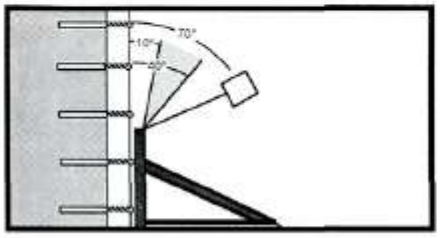
by Dennis Lester

Drummers are often found debating the stick-grip issue: traditional grip versus matched grip. The topic of foot-pedal techniques is debated less often. This article offers one drummer's view on techniques of the feet and adjustment of related equipment.

Bass Drum Pedal

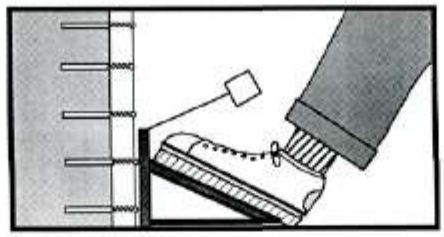
For maximum power, you need to use leverage. You get more leverage with a longer lever. The entire length of the bass drum pedal is measured from the top of the beater ball, through the machine, to the hinge near the heel. I prefer the longest possible setting without sacrificing speed. If the pedal feels like it is three feet long, it is too long to be useful. On the other hand, with the beater held very short, you may have a lot of speed, but your bass drum will lack projection due to the lack of power or leverage.

Another factor that influences power output of the bass drum pedal is the length of the full stroke. The longer the stroke, the greater the potential volume. I feel that 70 degrees is a reasonable angle at which the beater should rest away from the drumhead when your foot is not on the pedal.

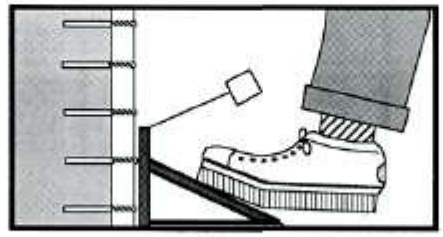


I do not feel that a great deal of spring tension is necessary. If the beater rests 70 degrees away from the head of the drum, the spring of the pedal is stretched quite far by the time the beater reaches the head. Most of our use of the pedal will be in a range of 10 to 40 degrees away from the head. My favorite type of pedal for the smooth use of the 70-degree stroke is one that has a round cam on the axle of the pedal. The gear is the key feature of the chain-drive pedals, *not* the chain.

There are two basic positions for the foot on the footboard of the bass drum pedal: heel-up and heel-down. For slow tempos and soft dynamics, I choose to keep my heel down. This position keeps my leg relaxed and loose. Many footboards are shaped like a foot, and for some reason, young drummers will tend to plant their toes way up on the "toe" of the pedal. To my way of thinking, this is the same as trying to hold drumsticks up near the shoulder of the stick. I would strongly suggest putting the heel on the heel plate of the pedal instead. Now, when you rock back on the heel, you release the beater completely. You should adjust your throne so you sit with your kneecap directly over the ankle. This should produce optimum motion and leverage while playing with the heel down.

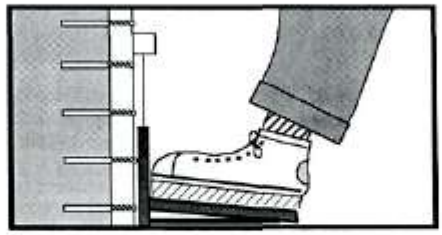


Sitting too close to the drumset will result in the foot having to be bent up in order to be raised any further.

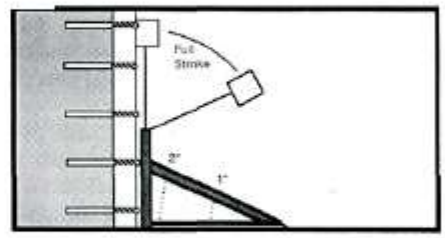


This causes leg discomfort and very limited pedal action with the heel down. I recommend that beginning drummers start with the correct position described above.

I use the heel-up position when I need more volume and/or speed. For power and speed, you again need to use leverage. I frequently warn students about keeping their toes too near the toe of the pedal when they raise their heels. I feel that, with the heel up, it is best to pull the ball of the foot back to a position two to four inches up from the hinge.



Measurements I have made show that, in one full stroke of the pedal, the toe of the footboard moves two inches, while the area two to four inches from the hinge moves only one inch.



The physical advantage of this approach is that you use leverage, *not* muscle, when you need to project volume. Again, have the kneecap over the ankle. If you were to sit too far away from the drumset, you could not bounce the whole leg on the pedal.

The advantage gained in sound here is more depth and resonance from your bass drum. I have seen some drummers "squash" the beater into the head during many of their strokes. This is caused by sitting too close to the set and forcing the weight of the leg down on the toe of the pedal, usually with the heel up. This only mutes the drumhead and subtracts from the sound the element most drummers want: deep-sounding bass. Try hitting a tom-tom and leaving the stick pressing into the head after impact. Sound good? I think not.

Hi-Hat

The hi-hat is not a drum, and for most hi-hat sounds, you do "squash" the pedal down. For soft dynamics, the heel stays down, because the pressure of the ball of the foot is sufficient for low volume.

For medium dynamic levels and tempos, many drummers use a "rocking" motion. Basically, the ball of the foot slams down with enough force to raise the heel. Then the foot rocks back on the heel to get set for another note. For instance, the heel would come down on beat 1, ball on 2, heel on 3, ball on 4. Avoid letting the cymbals ring when they come up by not letting them snap to the top of the stroke.

For loud dynamics and fast note values or tempos, the heel can stay up, bouncing the weight of the whole leg on the pedal. The toes *can* be up on the toe of the hi-hat footboard. Typical use for this technique might be swinging a big band on 2 and 4, driving a rock band on all four beats, or even substituting 8th notes on the hi-hat for a ride cymbal. As a special effect, you can slur or splash the cymbals by allowing them to pop up after making contact. This lets you play longer note values on the hi-hat.

The techniques mentioned here for both bass drum and hi-hat are ones I have found useful in a variety of musical styles. Try the ones that may be new to you, and add them to your bag of tricks.

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by James Morton

Drum Trivia #2

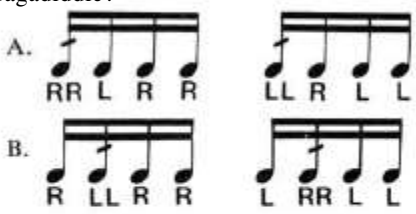
1. The following drummers all played with Duke Ellington. In what order did they appear with Ellington's band?
   A. Sam Woodyard, Rufus Jones, Sonny Greer, Louie Bellson.
   B. Sonny Greer, Sam Woodyard, Louie Bellson, Rufus Jones.
   C. Sonny Greer, Louie Bellson, Sam Woodyard, Rufus Jones.

2. Of the four drummers listed above, which one played with Ellington for the longest span?
   A. Sonny Greer
   B. Louie Bellson
   C. Sam Woodyard
   D. Rufus Jones

3. Of the four drummers listed above, which one played with Ellington for the shortest span?
   A. Sonny Greer
   B. Louie Bellson
   C. Sam Woodyard
   D. Rufus Jones

4. Rufus Jones's nickname was:
   A. Speedy
   B. Sticks
   C. Fats

5. Which figure below represents the single dragadiddle?



6. A "frijideira" is:
   A. An auto brake drum, played as a percussion instrument.
   B. A chime tree made from the cooling coils of a refrigerator.
   C. A frying-pan-shaped Brazilian instrument, chrome-plated and played with a metal beater.

7. *Decrescendo* is synonymous with what other musical term?
   A. *Diminuendo* B. *Dal Segno* C. *Da Capo*

8. *Volti subito,* usually abbreviated *V.S.* means:
   A. To turn the page quickly.
   B. To sing sweet and light.
   C. "To watch voltage"—a warning to users of Italian drum machines to make sure the power supply matches the voltage requirements.

9. Match these '60s rock groups with the correct drummers:
   Vanilla Fudge
   Young Rascals
   Guess Who
   Electric Flag
   The Doors

   Dino Danelli
   Carmine Appice
   Buddy Miles
   Gary Peterson
   John Densmore

10. Match these groups prominent in the '70s with the correct drummers:
   Queen
   Chicago
   Aerosmith
   Jethro Tull
   Grand Funk

   Joey Kramer
   Danny Seraphine
   Roger Taylor
   Don Brewer
   Barriemore Barlow

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DRUM TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. The following drummers all played with Duke Ellington. In what order did they appear with Ellington's band?
   (C) Sonny Greer, Louie Bellson, Sam Woodyard, Rufus Jones.

2. Of the four drummers listed above, which one played with Ellington for the longest span?
   (A) Sonny Greer (from 1919 to 1951)

3. Of the four drummers listed above, which one played with Ellington for the shortest span?
   (B) Louie Bellson (from 1951 to 1953)

4. Rufus Jones's nickname was (A) Speedy.

5. Which figure below represents the single dragadiddle?

6. A "frijideira" is (C) a frying-pan-shaped Brazilian instrument, chrome-plated and played with a metal beater.

7. *Decrescendo* is synonymous with (A) *diminuendo.*

8. *Volti subito,* usually abbreviated *V.S.,* means (A) to turn the page quickly.

9. Match these '60s rock groups with the correct drummers:
   Vanilla Fudge/Carmine Appice
   Young Rascals/Dino Danelli
   Guess Who/Gary Peterson
   Electric Flag/Buddy Miles
   The Doors/John Densmore

10. Match these groups prominent in the '70s with the correct drummers:
   Queen/Roger Taylor
   Chicago/Danny Seraphine
   Aerosmith/Joey Kramer
   Jethro Tull/Barriemore Barlow
   Grand Funk/Don Brewer

Scoring: 7-10 correct: Drum genius.
4-6 correct: You got the gig.
1-3 correct: Back to the practice pad.

Readers' Platform continued from page 4

BASICS

I want to offer congratulations on the initiation of your new *Basics* department [March '86 *MD].* As a beginning/intermediate drummer, I have enjoyed and profitted from past interviews and articles, but until now, little has seemed especially appropriate for a drummer at my level. In the interviews particularly, there is the feeling that what these accomplished players have to say would be much more moving and useful if one had some equivalent experience with which to relate their thoughts. The views they offer are inspiring, but until we reach that level of peerage, those of us still in the trenches could use some more practical advice. For the drummer with the desire, but not the know-how, your new department accomplishes just that end.

Vincent Robinson
Berkeley, CA

RAY AND CLIFF

I'm writing to let you know how much I enjoyed the April issue. The interviews and articles on Ray McKinley and Cliff Leeman were especially good. Think of the many years of experience they have combined—over 100! Incredible! And what they say makes good sense. The Ed Shaughnessy article was also great; the photos are clear and timely. Good work!

I drummed a bit in the '40s, and have a soft spot for the *old-timers* (they kept good *time).* How about some articles on Frankie Carlson, Nick Fatool, Al Stoller, Jimmy Vincent, Harry Yeager, Bunny Shawber, Mickey Scrima, etc.—some of the really good stick men of the '30s and '40s? You have a good balance of new, old, and "in between" drummers and groups; keep it up. The young drummers can learn from the old, and the old drummers can learn from the young. That's as it should be.

Colin Kidd
Hackensack, NJ

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed your April issue. Having been a subscriber since 1979, I've been growing a little disenchanted with *MD* as the reading has been aimed more and more at the young rock musician, with interviews of drummers who don't know what size drums they play, let alone the effect their choice of head has on their drum sound. Having actively played a wide variety of music for many years, I've missed the articles on the drumset "craftsmen" who played such a large part in creating the music and equipment we know today.

As a result, I was overjoyed with April's interviews with Cliff Leeman, Ray McKinley, Ed Shaughnessy, and Donny Baldwin. I especially enjoyed the article on Cliff, whose Chinese cymbal work in "Begin The Beguine" was one of my first introductions to the variety and beauty of cymbal color. I also liked Donny's thinking-man's approach to straight-ahead rock 'n' roll. Many of the drum sounds and styles we've grown to love originated with drummers such as these gentlemen, and it was a real pleasure to get to know them.

What's the best thing about the April issue? For the first time in quite a while, I can't wait for next month's to arrive!

Tom Eschenfelder
San Jose, CA

Editor's Note: It is our sad duty to report that, as we went to press for this issue, we learned of the passing of Cliff Leeman. Cliff died in the Medical Center of Princeton, New Jersey, on April 25, at the age of 72. Condolences to his wife, Irene, and to the rest of his family may be sent in care of MD.

TAPE HINT

Since I've learned so much from your magazine, I would like to pass on to you this helpful hint: if you're having trouble keeping a good grip on your sticks and aren't happy with any of the commercial drumstick tape products, try *Microfoam* First Aid Tape by the 3M Company. It's a thick, squishy foam tape that provides an excellent grip and gets sticky as you perspire. You can order it from most medical-supply drug stores.

William E. Rauscher
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Hamilton continued from page 29

this little band with Bud Shank, Laurindo Almeida, and Shelly Manne, who just left the group. It's called the L.A. 4, and I wondered if you would be interested in doing it." He said he'd be back in a week and we could talk about it. I was recording a suite Chick Corea had written for the band called "Suite For Hot Band." The album was called *Chick, Donald, Walter & Woodrow,* and we did Steely Dan tunes on one side while Chick Corea's suite is on the other side. We did that at Capitol Records in the first part of January, and on the breaks from recording, I was going over to Ray's office, which was right across from Capitol Records, and meeting with him to see what this L.A. 4 business was about. I did this for three days, and finally I decided to join the group. Businesswise, it was a tremendous move for me. Instead of riding a bus for 45 weeks a year, I could now live in one place, work about four months a year, and make a little more money.

RF: What was it like having to fill Shelly's shoes?

JH: I never tried to do that. I had to play it the way I wanted to play it. Ray made it known that he hired me for me and what I could contribute to the group. I've been doing that since '78. We did three records in January of '78 with Woody's band, one with Flip Phillips called *Together Again, Chick, Donald, Walter & Woodrow,* and a direct-to-disc called *Road Father.* After the *Chick, Donald, Walter & Woodrow* album, I just stayed in L.A. Living here was a ball, working three or four months a year, doing what I wanted the rest of the time, accepting gigs I wanted to take, and turning down ones I didn't want. I thought, "Man, this jazz business is easier than I thought it would be."

RF: But you've since learned that that's not true.

JH: Oh yeah. Jazz is the form of music that keeps going, but if you're looking at a graph as far as sales and popularity go, it's down near the bottom of the page. In all other kinds of music, acts go up and down, and in three to five years, you won't hear about people who are winning Grammys now. But most of the jazz artists keep that same profile, and it doesn't seem to change that much. That's one of the things I had to get used to. I just kept thinking, "Boy, if I could latch onto some big jazz group, that would be it for me." That's not the important thing to me now. The important thing to me is to play the music I want to play, because I love playing this kind of music. This is the only form of music where you can really express your feelings completely. You get solo time: If you're angry, it affects the group; if you're happy, it affects the group. In most other kinds of music, you can be hallucinating, and all the other musicians will just go along with what their roles are supposed to be. Jazz is such a personal and revealing music that your emotions are on the line. Everybody knows what you're feeling.

RF: Are there tips for improvisation?

JH: One of my pet peeves is hearing drummers take solos that turn into show-and-tell experiences. I'm not much for the extended drum solo, unless it has a form to it. I think that, any time you play, there has to be a form to what you're doing. Even avant-garde music has form to it. Jazz drummers are supposed to be playing the tune. Everybody else in the band improvises over the changes and the form of the tune. When it conies to a drummer, why do you have to pull out your Charlie Wilcoxon book and show everybody what you have? Think musically. I think like horn players a lot when I'm playing. If you're playing "Confirmation," play "Confirmation." Don't play "Satin Doll" or don't play a drum exercise. I want to hear eight-bar phrases or four-bar phrases or whatever constitutes the tune. That's the first thing I think you need to worry about. Secondly, I personally like to hear melodic lines on drums. I like to hear voices. I don't like to hear a lot of rumbling. I like to hear more single-note lines. Dynamics—if you have eight 8th notes, don't just play straight 8th notes at the same volume. Make a phrase out of them. Most horn players will not play every note. They swallow notes or play what we call "ghost" notes. You don't need all the notes. They just need to be implied. Those are some important things in improvisation.

RF: In our *Update,* you mentioned something about playing the legendary charts. How do you take a legendary chart and make it your own? How much liberty do you have, and when do you know that you can assert that liberty? What about working with these people who have had great drummers before you?

JH: The Basie Band is probably more restricting for a drummer than any other band, because of the list of great drummers who have been in that band. As I said before, though, we're all individuals. By not trying to fill someone's shoes, you respect what that person did and recognize that the things that person played could never be copied by anyone, but the influence is there. All you can hope for is that you're a good enough player to go in and apply your style to the band, and let the band style become part of you. It's a merging. It was a good experience for me to play with the band, and hear things I had heard Sonny Payne, Jo Jones, Gus Johnson, and Harold Jones—who are my four favorite Basie drummers—do. Everybody knows the Basie fills, and I was constantly going through battles with myself, saying, "Just succumb to it. Play what Jo Jones did, because it worked and it felt good." There were nights when I just felt that I should play the Basie style and what was expected of that chair, instead of playing what I wanted to play.

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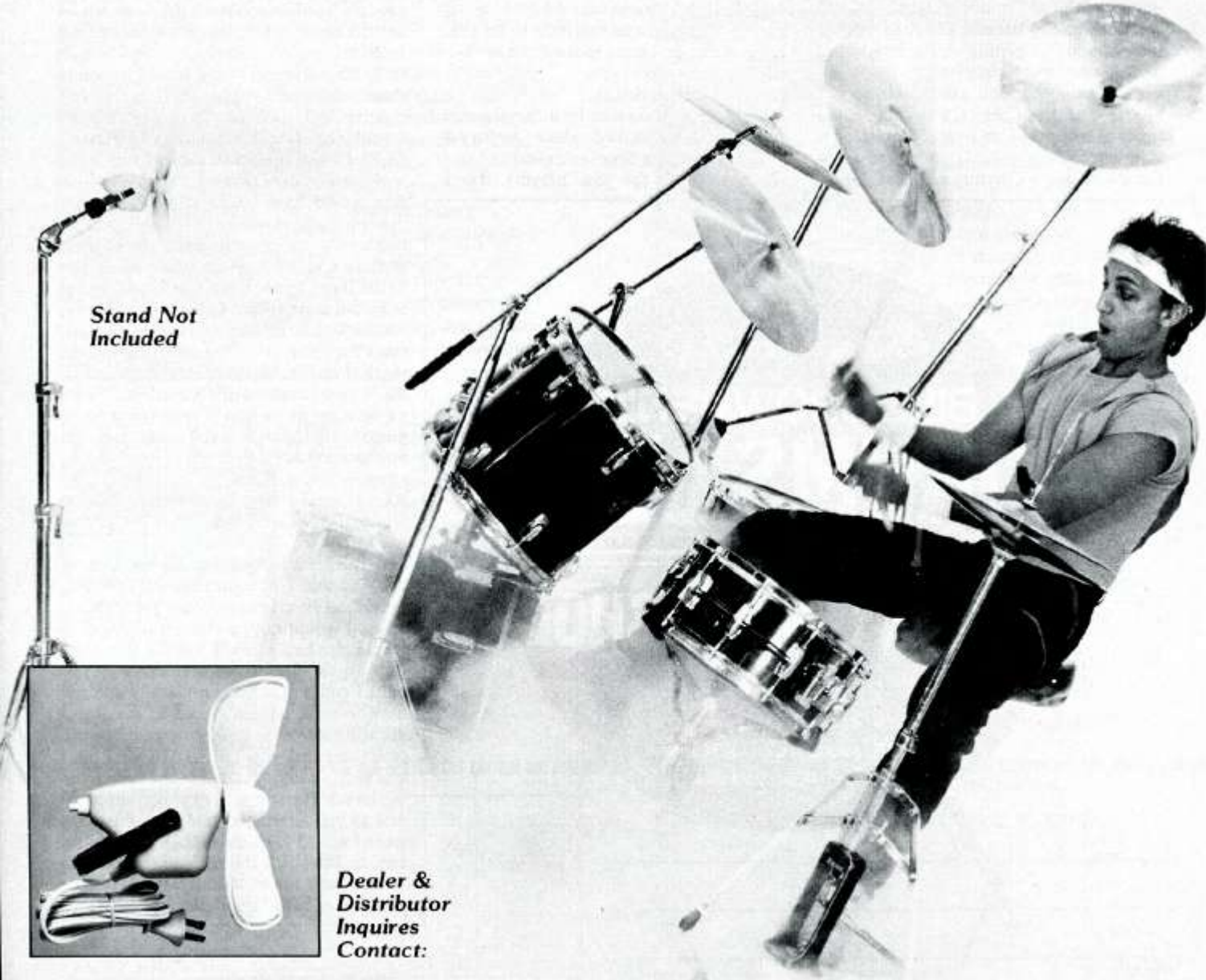

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RF: It's not that creative at that point.
JH: It's not, but that's where you really have to dig deep and search for where your creativity is going to work. Not everything you think of is going to work in that time slot, so you have to be more selective about what you're going to play. You can't lay a typical Elvin Jones fill in there that would clutter up things, if all they needed was the bass drum on 4 and 1. That's one of the greatest Basie fills. It was fun for me to play those charts and still try to be Jeff Hamilton.
RF: What have you been doing recently?
JH: Recently I went back with Monty. We played the legendary Gibson jazz party in Denver on Labor Day. At the last party, the drummers were Ed Shaughnessy, Butch Miles, Alan Dawson, Frankie Capp, Gus Johnson, and myself. Monty Alexander and John Clayton were there, so we played together. It felt so wonderful that we said, "This is too right to not make this happen again," so we decided to work as much as we could. I'm free-lancing now. I have to say that I'm honestly enjoying doing the things I'm doing right now, and I'm not working because I have to work. I look forward to getting on the bandstand with Monty every night, and when I sub with Woody's band, it's the same thing. I love to give drum clinics. I could give ten times as many as I'm giving. I'm doing a little bit of everything. I've started a big band with John Clayton with some great players like Snooky Young on trumpet, Bobby Bryant, Oscar Brashear, and George Bohanon. Ray Brown made the last rehearsal. We're trying to get that working in the Los Angeles area.
RF: What's going on with the L.A. 4?
JH: The L.A. 4 has become more of a side band for all of us, because Ray is active with Milt Jackson and he has his own trio. Since Bud Shank left the studios, he's back on the road playing jazz and getting great reviews. He's on his own and with Shorty Rogers. Laurindo Almeida is out with his wife, who is a singer. We also have a new guitar player whose name is Ron Eschete. If you add up the work, it will probably be about two and a half to three months a year. I think there still is an L.A. 4, but it hasn't been the main band for those three guys for a long time. When I first moved to Los Angeles, that was my bread and butter, and the money was great for five months a year. I lived in an apartment, I was single, and I had no overhead.
RF: I feel as though you really lead the bands you work with.
JH: Big band drums should be a strong part of the band, and you have to lead the band at certain times, musically and visually. It's required of you.
RF: How do you do that?
JH: I guess you do that by achieving that confidence we talked about before—knowing that your time feels good and that you were hired for your playing. There were a couple of incidents on Woody's band where we were having time controversies. People who had been there for a few years felt that their time was where the arrangement should be played. I listened to what they had to say, tried it, and it didn't work. That's when I realized that Woody did hire me for my playing, so I had to go in and play it the way I thought it should be played. It altered things in a minor way. They were things they had gotten used to doing over a period of years, and all of a sudden, somebody brought in a new idea. You just have to feel that you're solid enough and that your time is a good feel. That's another thing John Von Ohlen instilled in me: If you're playing good time, you're feeling good about your playing, and you're relaxed and happy with what you're doing, that goes through the band and the audience. Everybody is having a good time, which is what everybody is there for.

Go in and be strong. Each leader is different. Woody was not in control of bringing the band in sometimes. He would give enough freedom to the rhythm section to do it. There were things he would give me freedom on. You have to know which tunes he counts off at the tempo he wants them and which tunes he doesn't. For instance, "La Fiesta" is in 6/8, but he would turn around and say, " 'La Fiesta', Chick Corea, one, two, three, four," and we were supposed to start. The rhythm section would have to be intact from that moment to lay down a 6/8 feel. He did that because of his confidence in the rhythm section; you put it where you want it. But in the Basie band, the piano would set up the time, and Freddie Green, the guitarist, would lock it in for the rhythm section. Each band has its own way of letting the rhythm section do what it's supposed to do. Woody counted off "Caladonia" with no relation as to how it was going to be played. That also gives you confidence that you can do the job, and you either sink or swim.
RF: I would like to explore what is required of you in each situation you've worked in.
JH: The great thing about Monty Alexander was that I had just been playing big band, and I was invited into a trio situation where I would not just be a timekeeper. I would also be a melodic small-group soloist with smaller drums and smaller cymbals. I could play more musically and not have to be so definite about 15 musicians knowing where the downbeat was. The trio really revealed what I needed to work on. I was pretty heavy-handed at the time from big band. The trio setting was completely new to me, although I had played in trios when I was 15 years old in Richmond, Indiana, at Elizabeth Parker's Restaurant on Main Street. I really didn't have an idea of trio playing at Monty's level, though. It's a lot subtler, but you must still have the

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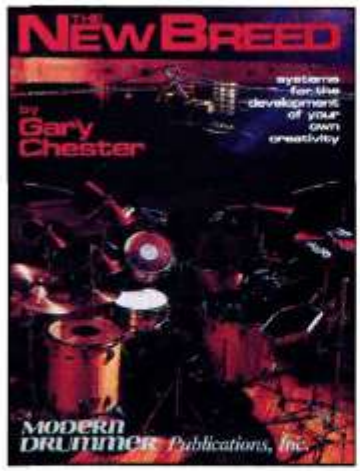

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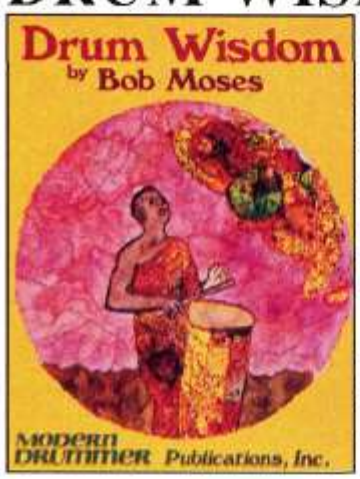

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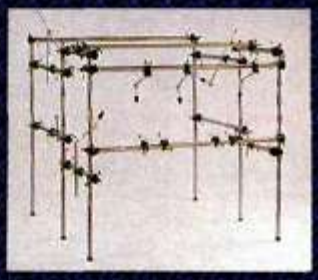

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energy behind the soft passages. I also learned that you have to keep the intensity inside and not let it get past your wrist. Otherwise, it's going to be too loud. But you still have the intensity, because you're thinking it and feeling it inside. You're sweating, groaning, and grunting, but all you hear is "ding, ding, ding, ding." It was great to have to learn that.

We talked about Woody's band already—not too subtle, not soft. But the difference in that and the Basie band was that Woody has more blowing opportunities—more improvisation for drums. It's more of a bebop band than the Basie band, and a drummer can loosen up and color a little more, instead of just being a rock-solid timekeeper.

The L.A. 4, up until the time I joined it, had been a very colorful chair for the percussionist. I am a jazz drummer, though, and don't fancy myself a percussionist. I just want to play the bread and butter: the drumset. There had been a lot of bells and tinkling effects, which is the way Shelly had approached the band. He felt it should be a light-playing group and not too much of a strong group. That was what I was faced with. During the time we were negotiating, I actually told Ray, "I have to be honest with you. Everything sounds great—the corporation, the financial arrangement, you want me to write, you want me to arrange—except I'm not crazy about the tapes you gave me. I love everybody in this band on his own, but there's something that is not touching me." He said, "That's why I called you in the band. You can put what you want in the band, and play the way you want to play." I want you to understand that I'm not putting Shelly down, because Shelly was one of my idols and best friends, and I'm still not over missing him. But I just didn't hear what I know Shelly Manne could do, what I know Ray Brown can do, and down the line. I felt the band should swing a little more and have some kind of groove in it, and I didn't really want to play a lot of percussion things, although I did because that was part of the book. I slowly phased it out as much as I could, though. That was an opportunity that was dropped in my lap. At the first rehearsal, they all actually told me to play the way I wanted to, and they would tell me if it didn't fit. I never heard a word.

RF: What about your own group?

JH: I did the album *Indiana,* which I enjoyed doing. I would like a shot at doing another album; however, record sales will dictate whether or not I'll have that opportunity. Drum albums are not big sellers unless you're Phil Collins . . .

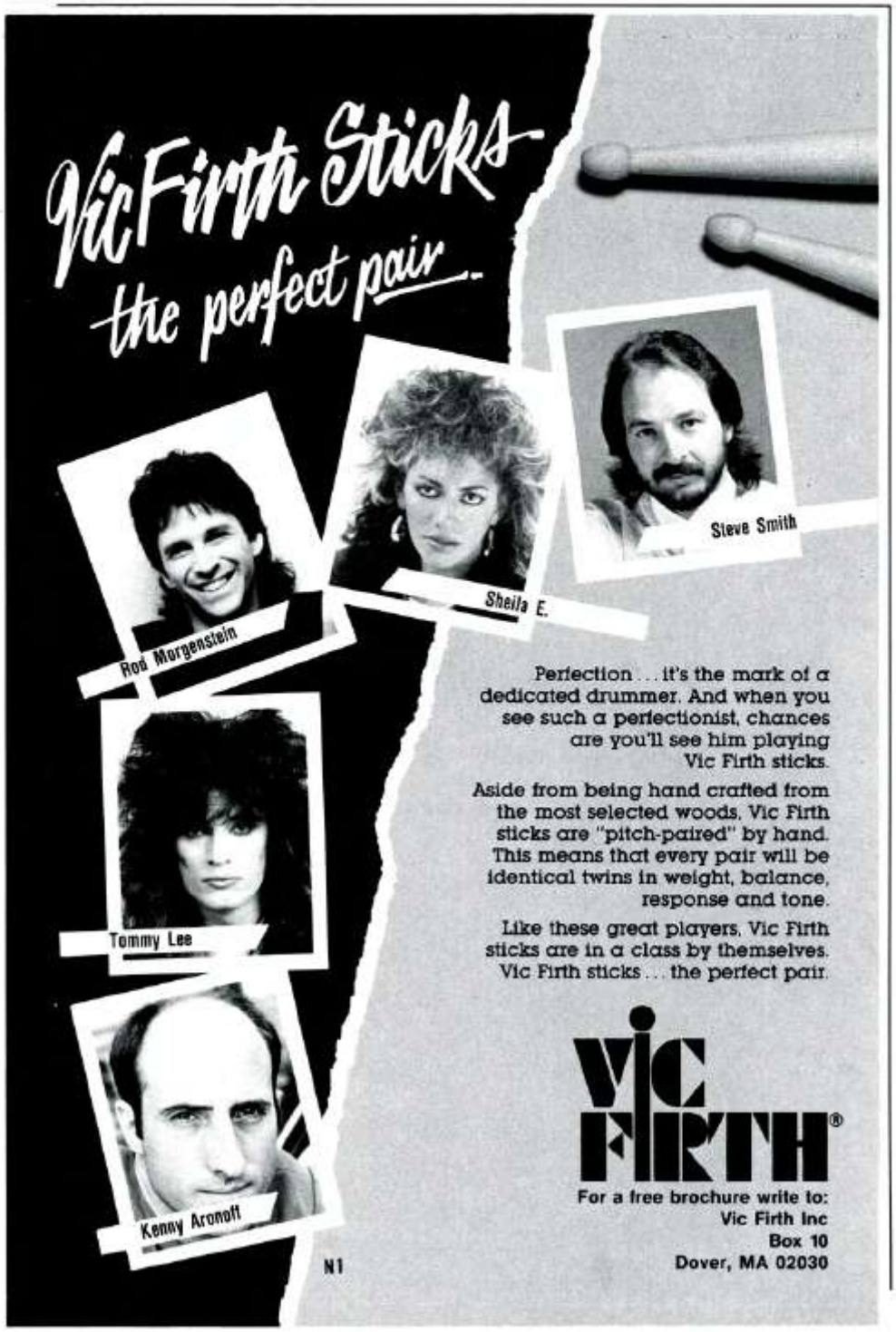
RF: Because that's not a drum album.

JH: That's right. By the way, I loved seeing him on the Grammys, being so real. Here's a real human being. The longer I'm in the business, that's what I find I want. I won't play with jerks anymore. I won't mention names, but I had a problem racially with someone because I wasn't black, and I will never play with that person again. I refuse to work with people who are not nice people. There are a lot of nice people who can play and who care about what they do. I don't enjoy working with people who are strung out all the time. I don't need that. That affects the music.

As for doing my own project, my goal is to keep doing what I'm doing for the rest of my life, which is not necessarily having my own band or my own record. That's not a goal to me. If that happens, that's okay, but I enjoy making music with people I love and care about. That's currently what I'm doing. I found that you can't get any better than that.

RF: In some of these bands, you might say you're a sideman, but I almost get the feeling that, in a jazz situation, it's much more of an ensemble. When you talk to rock people, they're sidemen when they're employed by an artist.

JH: I agree. I think the sidemen in jazz are sidemen because their names aren't on the marquee. They're not getting the most money in the band but very close to it, and sometimes the sidemen's names *are* on the marquee. With Monty Alexander, the names are up because we're a trio, and all three of us are equal as far as contributing



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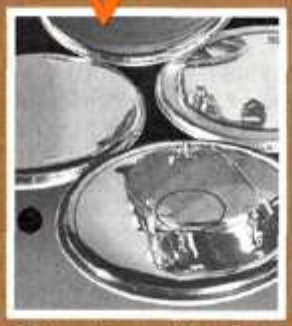

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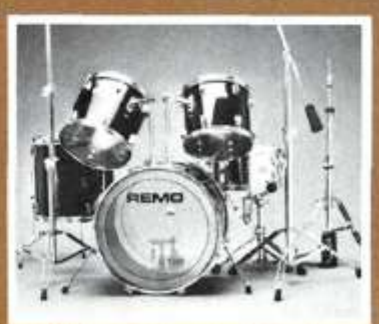

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to the music goes. That's what I want to do; I don't just want to play *for* somebody.

RF: What equipment do you use?

JH: I play Gretsch drums with calfskin heads. I use calf on top and *Fiberskyn II's* on the bottom.

RF: Why the calf?

JH: There's a feel that is so pure from a calf head. When you put a stick on a calf head, the feel of it is unlike any plastic that is made. The closest to the calf head is the *Fiberskyn II,* medium. The calfskin head produces such a warm sound in a drum that it's worth all the headaches of having to tune it three times during a gig, although sometimes it doesn't have to be tuned at all. I used to use them on top and bottom, but I learned my lesson in Washington, D.C., at Wolftrap in July '78, when it was damp and very humid, and I couldn't play the drums. You should only put the calf heads where you can get to them and tune them. You can't get to the bottom easily.

Calf heads have a wood hoop around them, and when you put this on wood drumshells and then put a drum hoop over that, you're not getting metal against metal, so you're not getting that false ring. As the shell vibrates after you hit the drum, you're not getting the metal against metal vibrating. You're getting the wood hoop, which is deadening against the metal hoop of the drum, so it's producing warmer, lower overtones. I don't use any muffling. I have a pair of men's underwear in the bass drum. From time to time, I use the internal tone control on the snare drum, but no other tone controls on any other drum.

I use Zildjian cymbals. I use a 19" A mini-cup with three rivets in it for trio playing and small-group things. That is my main ride cymbal. I have this Chinese cymbal that I got in Amsterdam for $70 in 1975. I drove a hole in the bell myself and put about ten rivets in it. Zildjian, in fact, uses my cymbal for research. I'm using *New Beat* hi-hats, which I got in about 1975. Most of my cymbals are old, warm, and dark. I like getting that sound out of them. I have a 75- or 80-year-old K Zildjian that belonged to my drum teacher, John McMahan, in Indiana. For big band cymbals, I use a 24" K, one of the original cymbals from Istanbul, which I got when I went in the Dorsey Band, and I move the sizzle over on the left and use that for a crash-ride. I pretty much use the same cymbals on everything. I just try to change the stroke if they need a different sound.

RF: Do you endorse Gretsch?

JH: I've been on that company's roster since 1974. Gretsch did some heavy advertising when I was on Woody's band until about '78. Since then, I've gone through something like six presidents of the company, and you get lost in the shuffle. The only jazz player I know who Gretsch is doing anything with is Tony Williams. My complaint with drum companies, and especially Gretsch, is that they're forgetting about the jazz people who put them on the map in the first place. Gretsch lost Mel Lewis and Elvin Jones when the company swept jazz drumming under the carpet, because jazz drummers don't sell 15-piece drumsets. Kids will see somebody in a rock group who plays the kit, and the company will sell the drums. Jazz drummers just won't sell the great quantities of drums that somebody in the limelight will. It's business, and I understand it, but loyalty is loyalty. I've had offers from other companies for years, but my sound is the Gretsch drum sound.

RF: You work with brushes a lot.

JH: Brushes, to me, are a dying art, and those who play with brushes do not spend enough time trying to create new sounds or different things. Most of the good brush players are 50 years old or older, and there's a reason for that. When people started plugging in their instruments to play, there was no need for brushes; you couldn't hear them. That was the decline of the brushes. I got started because a pair was thrown in with my first drumset when I was 13. I thought, "I wonder what these are?" My parents had some Louie Armstrong and Basie records. I heard them and thought, "I wonder how they're getting that sound?" When I saw the brushes, I put it together. I was fascinated by them from the first time I saw them. Then having to play that trio in town, I had to experiment and try to come up with how to play time and how to play softly. I didn't get all that great at it, but John Von Ohlen showed me that lateral-stroke approach,

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which was coming in from the side, instead of playing like they were sticks. He came in from the side with brushes, and it got a much warmer sound. I took that and ran with it. When I was with Monty Alexander, I had a lesson with Philly Joe Jones in Philadelphia. He spent about four hours with me and quite a bit of time on brushes. That opened a door for me to go ahead and do what I wanted to do with them. I still use some of his basic strokes. I feel that, if you're strong enough in something, you can change what's going on in the business. If you play brushes well, people will come to you. I get called for brushes a lot. I did a record with Keely Smith recently, and almost all of it was brushes. I enjoy that. I'll take gigs that I know are going to be basically quiet, because sometimes I'd rather play brushes all night than pick up the sticks.

RF: Since it is such a dying art, where can a young player learn to play brushes well?

JH: Apprenticeship. I go to Scottsdale and teach at the Creative Drum Shop every three months. I'm the visiting jazz teacher there. I will go in and teach from 10:00 in the morning until 8:00 at night, and I may give five brush lessons a day. I would love to get that going at some other drum shops around the country because I enjoy it. The students I'm getting are mostly people who have been through the technical training, and are just trying to find their own concept and style.

RF: We started this conversation on the availability of jazz gigs. You obviously make a good living, but that's not really common. When we did our *Update,* you seemed very unwilling to compromise. What are your feelings now?

JH: The same. That has been my feeling for years, and it will continue to be the same. I don't want to do studio work.

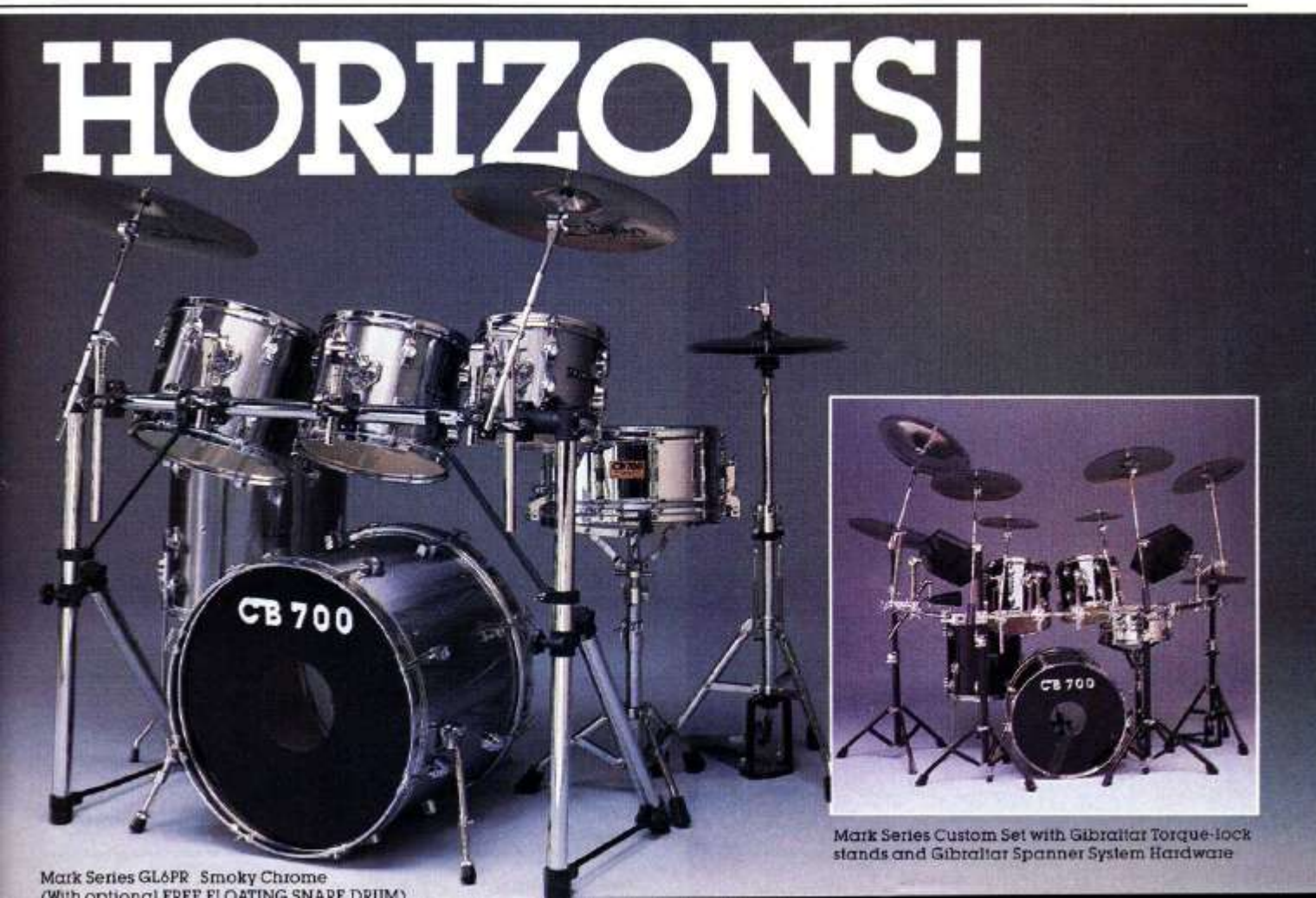
RF: Yet, you said you didn't want to be on the road that much.

JH: That's why I said I want to do exactly what I'm doing now, which is be on the road maybe five or six months a year and make the amount of money I make by doing that, then fill in the other six months by teaching and doing clinics.

RF: You must realize that you're very, very lucky. Most people have to compromise.

JH: Sure they do, and I admire them for doing that. I would probably do it, too, if the bottom fell out. I had a very slow period about four years ago when, all of a sudden, the L.A. 4 did maybe three gigs that year. I got married in May of '82, I went out for a week after the wedding, and that's all we did for that year. I didn't have any income, and I hadn't hustled for any other work. I had a rough year financially and musically, too, because I was accepting gigs that were jazz gigs, but they weren't good jazz gigs and they weren't good financial gigs either. I thought, "Listen, you've been uncompromising since you were 19 years old." So that year I decided that I might get into some studio work if it were thrown in my lap. I wouldn't like it, but I'd go ahead and do it, because as you get older, you learn there are more important things in your life. I kept telling myself that I was being very selfish—that I had someone else to think about now. I started doing studio work, and the work started coming in. Being lucky, as you said, is a disadvantage, too, because everyone looks at you as being lucky, so everyone thinks you've got all the work in the world. "He's always busy, so why don't we give it to Bob Moore or to so-and-so?"

The other thing you can look at is how many people are doing what I'm doing in the style of music I'm doing. It's getting more and more limited as years go on. Before I was married, I actually thought I would leave the music business and sell shoes or men's clothes, if I could not play the music I loved to play. It's not worth it to me to go into a job I don't want to play and dread it. Music is something I've always loved, and I don't want to go into it as a nine-to-five. I'd be punching in, doing my four hours, and getting out of there as soon as I could. I always thought how horrible it would be to do that. I think I still feel that way. I'd open a pipe shop or a tennis shop instead of playing "Jeremiah was a bullfrog." I don't think I could do that. I hope I'm uncompromising, playing the music I believe in. I don't think that's going to ever change.



What Are You Worth?

by Rodman A. Sims

Long before I developed a teaching practice, I supplemented my income by working in the sheet music department of a local music store. In addition to assisting customers, it was my responsibility to sign up interested parties for music lessons. One day, a customer approached me expressing an interest in guitar lessons. I said to him, "We have two guitar teachers, each with his own style of playing and teaching." I went on to say, "I feel I should mention that one of the teachers charges $8.00 per half hour and the other $ 12.00." To which the customer replied, "Is the $12.00 teacher better?"

The customer's question about the difference in price was honest, genuine, logical, and dead wrong. It so happened that the guitar teacher who charged $12.00 was little more than a con artist. But how was I going to convince the customer of what I knew about the overpriced teacher? Since it was not my job to sell any one teacher over another, I decided to stay out of the discussion entirely. I simply suggested that the more expensive teacher evidently felt he was worth what he charged. At that, the customer proceeded to sign up with the more expensive teacher.

Something about human nature rang loud and clear in my mind in the course of that discussion. I had just witnessed someone literally walk in off the street, sign up for one month's worth of lessons, and choose one teacher over another on the basis of price alone. As I continued to work in the store over the next several months, I saw this same occurrence happen repeatedly. It became clear to me that, even with all of the faulty merchandise and poor service in the world today, people still cling to the irrational belief that "you get what you pay for." This attitude is constantly reinforced in our minds, because experience tells us that the more expensive model is the better-quality model. Products offer a consumer hard evidence of workmanship. Something that is poorly made is easy to spot when compared to higher-quality objects. Even the average person who knows nothing about the drums can distinguish between a top-of-the-line drumset and one that is less expensive.

The same thinking that shapes our value for expensive products spills over and shapes our thinking when it comes to services. But drumsets are not drum lessons, any more than a product is a service. It's more difficult to ascribe a value to a music lesson, because information and time (both being quite exclusive in assigning worth) represent the chief commodities. How *does* one decide how much to charge for a music lesson?

Assessing one's worth as a music teacher can be difficult. I taught my first drum lesson when I was just 17 years old. Even though I played well for a 17-year-old, I can remember feeling pretty humble when setting my price. At that time, the going rate for a private music lesson was about $12.00 per hour. Since I was just a beginning drum teacher, I felt I should charge appreciably less than those teachers who had more experience. As a result, I charged only $6.00 per hour, or half the going rate. It did not take me long to realize the error in my thinking. After several months of teaching new students, as well as some older pupils who had studied prior to seeing me, I stopped feeling inferior. As I continued working in a music store, my eyes were opened to the fact that some music teachers were not credible at all, even though they had taught for many years. The moral of the story is that, when it comes to teaching the fundamentals of music, the number of years one has taught isn't really that critical, so do not sell yourself short financially for this reason.

My next bit of advice is for you to be constantly aware of the "going rate." The going rate for music lessons is not a mysterious entity. Just pick up the phone and call several music stores that advertise drum lessons. This will give you a basis for comparison. Occasionally, young teachers who are *hungry* make the mistake of charging well below the standard, because they believe they will attract more students that way. That assumption is wrong. As I pointed out earlier in the story about the two guitar teachers, people value objects and services if they come at a premium price. Why else would people spend $30.00 to $50.00 on a pair of fashion jeans? By charging way below the going rate you lose two things—money and respect. There are, of course, limits to what you can charge, but students will not flock to you if you charge $3.00 a lesson.

Another factor in determining how much to charge is your expenses. If you plan to teach at the homes of the students, this cost should be reflected in your fee. I was recently asked to teach at a music school located about 30 minutes (by freeway) away from my home. In setting my price, I was forced to consider the added cost I incurred in gasoline and driving time. I strongly recommend that you consider all of the variables before you agree on a price for your services.

Now consider the following situation: You are charging $8.00 per lesson, and across town, another teacher charges $10.00. Should you raise your fee? The answer depends on your economic situation. If teaching is your sole source of income, maybe you should consider giving yourself a raise. On the other hand, if your income from teaching is supplementary and you feel adequately compensated at your current price, then I wouldn't suggest such a raise. However, even if the money you earn from teaching does not constitute your full income, you should still maintain a rate comparable to that of other music teachers in your area. Too often, teachers fail to raise their rates for fear of losing their students. If you think the time has come for you to raise your fee, then do it, and don't lie awake at night worrying about how many of your students will return the following month. My experience has shown me that, if a dollar or two increase is enough to drive away a student in search of a cheaper alternative, then that student's interest in continuing is marginal.

One problem that crops up is letting the age of the pupil influence what you charge for a lesson. I can recall quite vividly standing next to a percussionist in an orchestra and discussing her new venture into teaching. She happened to be a very fine mallet player and snare drummer. In the course of the conversation, she mentioned that she charged $5.00 for her lessons. Then in her next breath she said, "Except for my younger students, whom I charge $3.00." I thought to myself, "What difference does it make? If students want to learn to play an instrument, then they are all going to have to travel more or less the same road to gain competence, regardless of age."

Finally, so that I am not misunderstood, experience and notoriety as a player can and should be rewarded financially. I made the point earlier that the new teacher should not feel a sense of lessened worth if he or she is teaching the basics to beginners. But most pros (people who make their livings in music) deserve every extra penny they charge to teach as compensation for "paying dues." The information they offer to advanced students is invaluable, for it cannot be gained by any other method than listening to the well-intentioned advice of an experienced professional.

In short, if you are qualified enough as a player to prompt someone into asking you for lessons, then you ought to charge at least the "going rate." If your experience is great and you enjoy some degree of acclaim as a player, then think nothing of charging over the standard rate. Also, don't forget to keep an eye on both your expenses and the competition's current rate. Lastly, do not embrace extraneous or largely irrelevant factors that might cause you to set yourself up for a financially unsound teaching practice.

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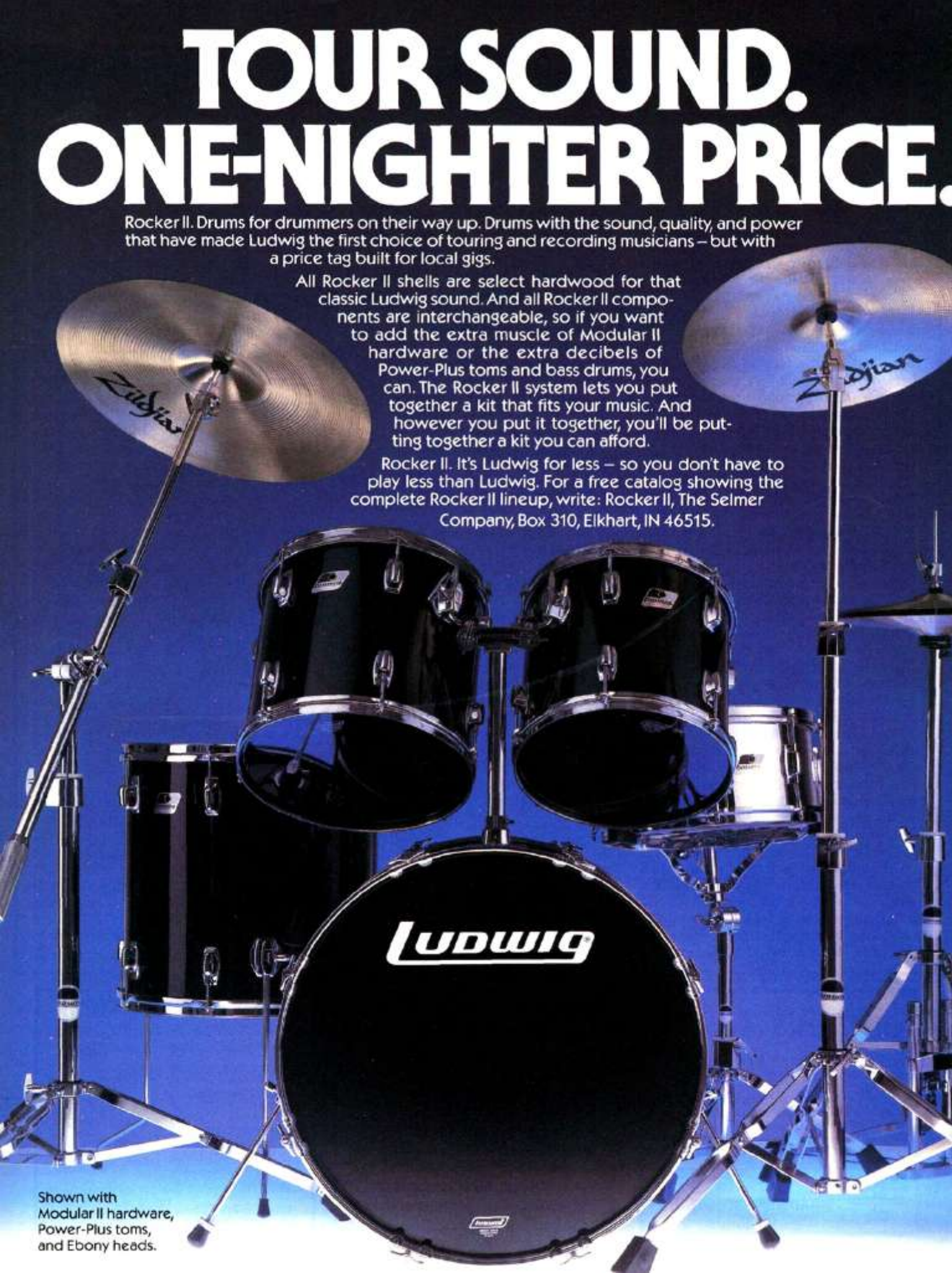

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Tempo Problems

by Roy Burns

A good friend of mine recently went through a tempo crisis. For several years, he had been playing with a group that consisted of a guitar player, a bass player, a keyboard player, and my friend, the drummer. The group had an opportunity to do some recording with the idea that they might be able to land a recording contract.

At the first recording session, the guitarist decided to change one of the arrangements that the band had been rehearsing for several months. He also decided to play the song slower. Playing a song slower than you are used to playing it—especially when you consider the pressure of recording—can be very difficult. It is usually easier to increase the tempo than to decrease it. At any rate, each time an arrangement was changed, any resulting difficulty was blamed on my friend, the drummer. Some of the arrangements had some very involved drum parts. Rhythms, lyrics, and tempos were being changed, and tempers got shorter and shorter.

Each time the group listened to a playback, someone found fault with the drummer. Comments such as, "Why can't you play two extra bass drum beats in that break? Why don't you play a different rhythm in the first section? That's not the feel I want," and "I don't like the drum sound" became the order of the day (or actually the week).

Due to lack of direction (or the lack of a good producer), the demo recording session disintegrated into "We can't play with this drummer!" The group broke up, and the guitar player blamed the drummer. Finally, the bass player began to agree with the guitar player. "Yeah, you are right. We need a better drummer."

Unfortunately, my friend began to *feel* that the whole mess was his fault. The harder he had tried, the more critical the group had become. Every mistake or slight fluctuation in tempo had been blamed on him, and finally, he was blamed for "destroying" the recording session.

I have several observations regarding this situation and others like it. First of all, the biggest problem that drummers have is that a melody player and/or singer is usually the leader of the band. Such people often have little understanding of what the drummer can do or is supposed to do. For example, have you watched most guitar or horn players tap their feet? Rarely is it really in time. If they rush a phrase, their feet also rush. They often lack the coordination to tap their feet evenly while playing syncopated patterns. However, these same people feel qualified to instruct the drummer on tempo problems.

Secondly, the misconception exists in many groups that the drummer should maintain a perfect tempo, even if other members of the band rush or drag. They seem to think that drummers can play without listening to—or being influenced by—what is going on around them.

Thirdly, a problem is created when the guitar player and the bass player crank up their amplifiers to an ear-splitting level. How can a drummer hold these players together if they don't listen to him or her? Sheer volume can be overpowering when the drummer is attempting to keep the band from rushing.

Finally, if the guitar player and the bass player are entitled to criticize the drummer, why can't the drummer criticize them? Why shouldn't it be possible for the drummer to tell the guitar player that he or she is rushing on certain phrases? Why can't the drummer criticize the settings on the bass amp? If everyone is concerned about the sound of the group, then everyone—including the drummer—should have a voice in making decisions that affect the group's performance.

Here are some suggestions for keeping our friends honest: Suppose someone in the band says something like, "Can I offer you some advice on the way your drums sound?" You should say, "Sure, if I am allowed the same privilege. Can I offer you some helpful advice as well?" This will usually get across the idea that criticism is a two-way street. So is respect.

If there is a time problem on a particular song, point out to the group that you can't correct it all by yourself. A band is a team, and a team functions best when the members cooperate. Each person in the band contributes to the sense of tempo and the time feel in a group.

To improve communications in a band, don't try to fix the "blame" on someone. Try to work out the problem through mutual respect and cooperation. It takes a little effort, but other musicians will respect you if you concentrate on *the problem,* rather than *on personalities.*

If you are going to record, try to have a clear understanding of your material *before* you get into the studio. A recording session is really not the place to rehearse or rewrite material. Obviously, changes can be made after listening to a playback, but a clear idea of what you want to accomplish will eliminate many problems and help to reduce the pressure of recording.

If possible, have a producer, a friend with some recording experience, or a very experienced recording engineer on hand to give some objective comments during the recording session. This can help to avoid friction between the band members, and it is one reason why top groups hire a good producer.

Remember that you are human. Drummers are not drum machines. Drum machines may be perfect, but they don't swing, and they can't project emotion. Remember, too, that your sense of tempo is no better than the people you play with. My friend is now in a new band, and suddenly his tempo crisis is over. Everyone in this new group thinks he plays just what is needed. The last I heard, they were thinking of making a record.

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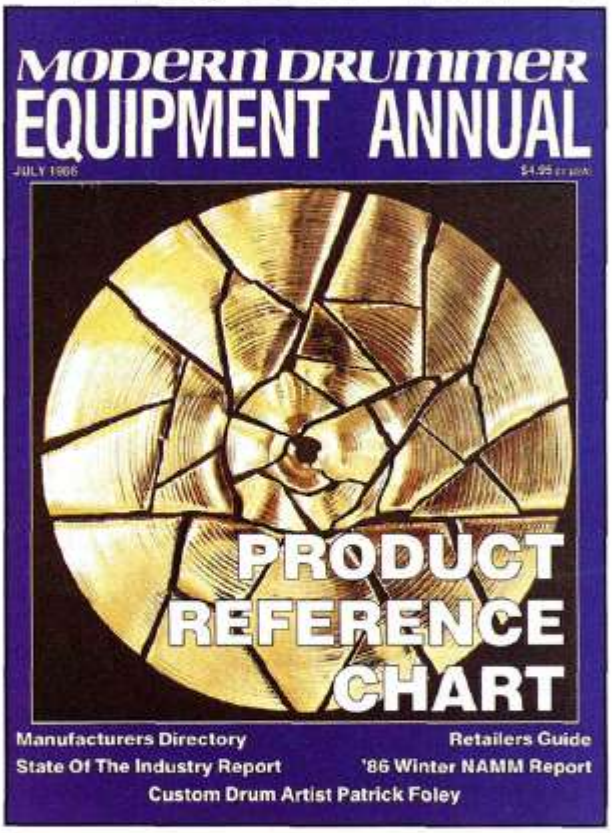

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Noble & Cooley continued from page 33

plied with a universal mounting plate, so drummers can use their existing equipment and throw our drums onto it. This also sort of assures us that people won't be putting holes into our solid shells, because besides sound, there could be other factors involved—like cracking. Because of the thinness of the one-piece shell, we can't have anybody bolting things to the side of the shell. Our basic shells are *W* thick, and a 10" tom is down to 3/16". It would be much better to put the drums up on RIMS."

Bob Gatzen explains the company's initial goals for the new drumkits. "We're hoping to get the new sets into the hands of endorsers who can influence consumers and get the word out that the drums have a new kind of sound. For a while, everybody was into the 'wet sound' in drums; before that, it was wide open and ringy. For a while, it got into deep toms and heavier heads. Now I notice that a lot of studio players are taking the muffling off and playing their snares wide open again. They're able to do that now because of today's studio technology—like sound gates and limiters and room simulators. Perhaps we can come up with a new sound that might attract certain players to get involved. It's a two-way street; it also can help them. They can be trend-setters with something new and original. Drummers might want to get their hands on one of our kits and set some new standards that would be representative of *themselves* playing the instrument.

"Steve Schaeffer is a great endorser for us. He's got his second snare drum now, and he's told us that he goes into studios where the engineers ask him: 'Did you bring your N&C?' John Robinson, Steve Smith, Prairie Prince, Paul Wertico, and Larrie Londin are now using our snares, and we're very excited at the fact that Phil Collins has signed on as an endorser."

What about competition from other, more established, top-line drumset companies? Does that concern the folks at Noble & Cooley? According to Jay, "Well, there's really nothing else on the market like our drums. They're a unique design, and you'd be comparing apples to oranges. No one else has a one-piece shell or this type of hardware."

There's no denying the fact that Noble & Cooley drums cost more than almost any other on the market. What is it about the manufacturing process that makes the drums so costly? Jay elaborates on the difficulties involved with solid wood shell manufacturing.

"For one thing, it's very much easier to make a ply shell, because it's easy to bend veneer. You don't have to steam it; you can soak it in water and bend it into its element. And then you laminate it. You put dry wood into a cylinder, glue both sides, put another one in, and when you put the pressure to it and the glue dries in ten minutes, you have a completed shell ready for sanding and spraying. For a maple shell, you have to get green wood, steam it and bend it, and then age and cure it. There are a lot of steps involved in making sure the shell doesn't crack, split, or warp. There is a high rate of throw-outs. We have to hand-select every piece of wood before we even consider planing it. If there's the slightest flaw, we won't even waste the labor on bending it, because the labor is the most costly element. It takes us 37 separate operations to make a drum, where a ply shell takes about half that.

"Out of 400 board feet of lumber, we get about 60 to 80 drums. That's due to the selectivity we must maintain over our materials. And that's 400 feet of *choice* maple—the very special wood cut for us by the gentleman I mentioned before. If we didn't reject what we did, we could make 250 drums out of that much wood.

"We still have incidences of shells that we've steamed, bent, and dried having cracks when they're turned out of the mold! They've already cost us a lot in time and labor, and they're useless. That has to be figured in. We've had shells that went as far as final finishing, and the stain finish pulled out a tiny flaw in the glue joint that wasn't visible up to that point. There's a case of a drum that's been through the entire 16-week cycle, and cost us a great deal to prepare, and *still* can't be sold. Those are candidates for the band saw; we cut them up as samples to show dealers our finishes."

It's been suggested that the American drum industry is in a historical reversal—getting back towards the small, family owned or even individual craftsman level, rather than corporate entities. It may get to the point where "mass-produced sets" will automatically mean "imports," while high-quality, hand-crafted instruments will come from small American operations, at a higher price. How does the Noble & Cooley operation fit into this picture?

Jay replies, "I think you've just described our goal. We want to fit into that craftsman-type image of quality and maintain that. We're not looking to become a major producer in the tradition of Ludwig in its heyday."

Bob Gatzen adds, "I think that we knew when we made the snare drum. If you're going to have to retail a snare for four or five hundred dollars, how many people can you expect to walk into a store and buy it? We know it's a limited market. But we have a good start. Our goal is to set a new standard in the American drum industry, and I think we're heading in that direction. We feel good about where we're going."

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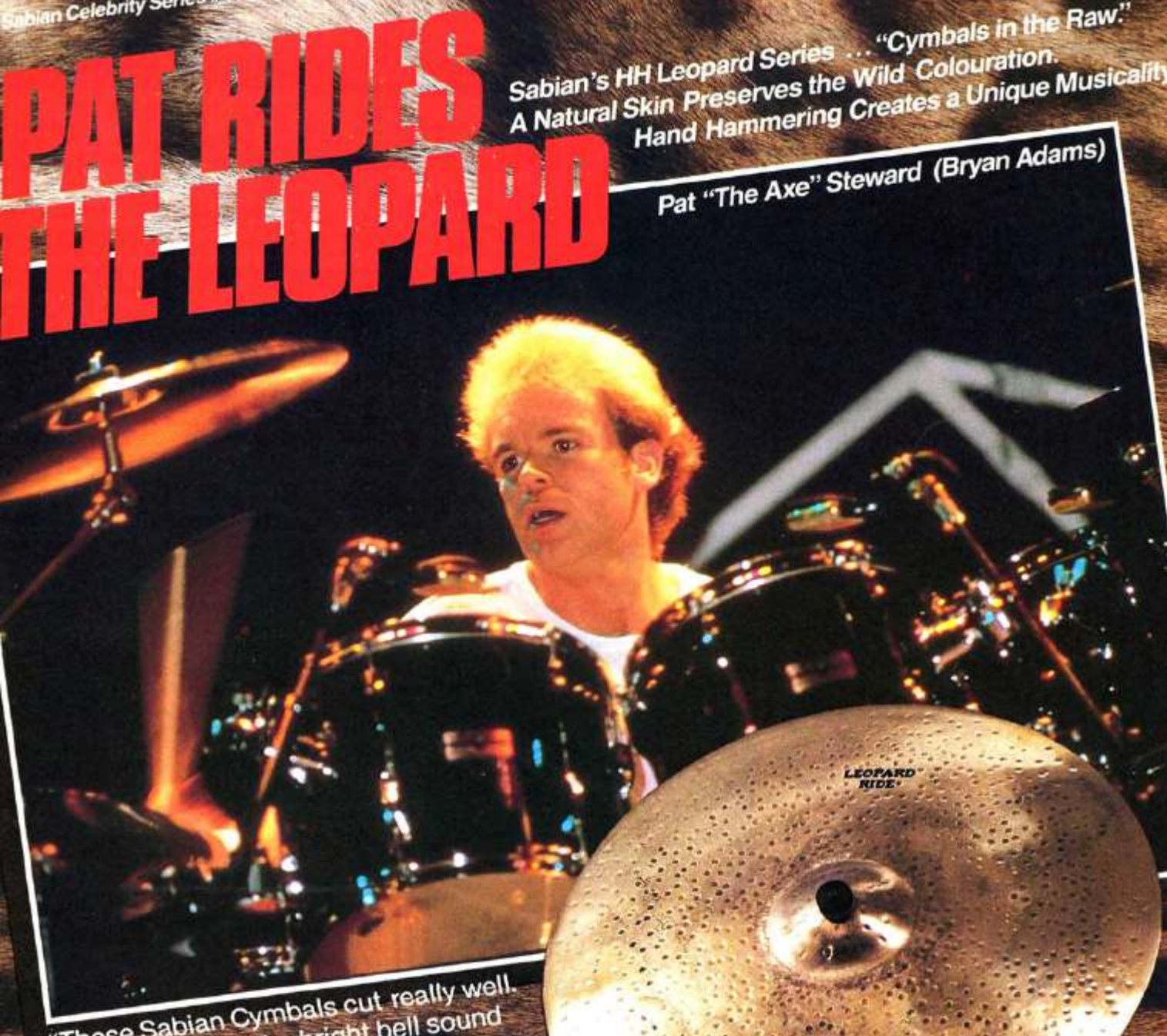

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The Fine Art Of Lis

I don't think there's any question that a musician's talent is primarily judged by how well he or she *plays.* But I also firmly believe that a large portion of that same musician's abilities depends on how well he or she *listens.* How many times have you heard a well-known player complimented for having "big ears"? We're not referring to hat supports here, but rather to that player's ability to listen to everything going on in his or her musical environment, assimilate it, and translate it into "just the right thing to play"—or not to play, as the case may be.

I recently had an unusual opportunity to see and hear several drummers performing simultaneously with the same band. It was like a scientifically controlled experiment: the same band, the same tunes, the same sound system and acoustic environment, the same audience; only the drummers were different. Each drummer played on his own kit, and each played in both solo and ensemble spots. And although each was an excellent player in his own right, there was a clearly displayed difference in musical awareness. That difference was mainly how each drummer *listened to* what was going on around him.

The differences between these drummers' performances got me to thinking about the "fine art" of listening—especially for club drummers. Just how important is it to be a good listener when you're probably playing the same, well-rehearsed and time-tested material over and over again? What exactly should a club drummer listen *for*? And what benefits can that drummer expect to derive from making such an effort?

I've stated before that I think the greatest danger facing a club musician is complacency. When you play in the same rooms frequently, and when you play the same basic repertoire for extended periods of time, a sense of creative apathy can set in very easily. It's not so much boredom as simply "settling into a routine." That routine may become very comfortable and easy—but not particularly exciting or interesting. And that lack of excitement or interest on the part of the band is readily perceived by the band's audience.

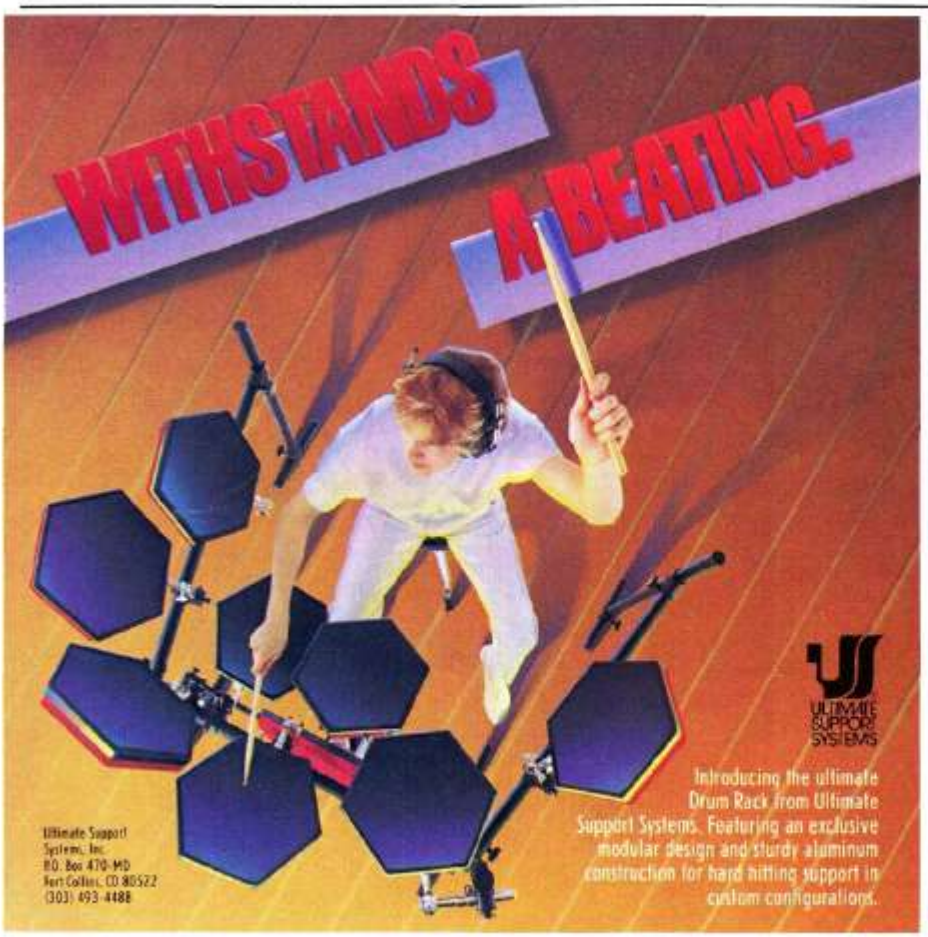
I've always felt that a parallel can be drawn between a long-term club engagement or circuit tour and a long-running Broadway show. How do the members of the cast of *A Chorus Line* keep their performance fresh and vital in a show that's been running for over nine years? The answer is a concept that's called in theater 'The Illusion Of The First Time." Simply put, it means that you approach each and every performance as if it were the first time you were doing it. All aspects—creative, emotional, technical, etc.—are freshly dealt with at each and every performance. I believe that this concept should be applied to club playing, and it can be applied most directly to listening. You should be listening to every element of your performance as if it were the first time you were hearing it.

Before The Band Starts

The place to start applying "The Illusion Of The First Time" is on your drums, before the band ever starts. You should listen to the tuning of your kit each night as if you had just set it up in a new room. Remember, an extremely gradual decline in tuning quality, head condition, and other factors can take place over a period of time in a club situation—so gradual in fact that you may not notice it from night to night. At the start of each gig, the drums will sound pretty much like they did at the end of the night before. The problem is that it may not actually be what you'd like them to sound like in the ultimate sense; it's just what you've gotten used to over the course of the engagement. On the other hand, if you come in each evening and *listen* to the kit as if it were the first time you'd heard it, you'll keep the tuning at its optimum and thereby produce your best sound. Listen for heads that are unevenly tensioned or going dead, listen for rattles or squeaks in lugs or pedals, listen for cymbals that are mellowing due to accumulating dirt, etc. Take what steps are necessary to keep your sound fresh, and that will go a long way toward keeping your playing fresh as well.

Playing With The Band

Once you start playing with the band, "The Illusion Of The First Time" really applies. Think of all the factors that com-



by Rick Van Horn

tening

bine to create a musical performance: each player's individual part, the arrangement of all the parts combined, the balance of individual volume levels, the "feel" and sense of time, the inspirational nature of solos, the "lock" in the ensemble work (especially from the rhythm section)—the list goes on and on. And while it is possible to fall into that apathy I mentioned earlier and let each of these elements simply run its "normal course," it is also possible to approach each of them freshly each night, thereby creating an exciting, original performance that both overcomes your own complacency and also projects your best efforts to your audience.

The way to make sure that everything is working together in your band is to listen to everything else *first,* and yourself *second.* It's simple physics; you can't relate your playing to the rest of the band's if you can't *hear* the rest of the band. Listen to the ensemble balance, and adjust your own level so that you provide either the support or the leadership that is called for at that moment. If it's your turn to shine, then shine brightly, but be prepared to sit back and groove quietly when it's someone else's turn. You'll also find that there are often subtle nuances in the playing of others that you can "latch onto" in your own playing, thus creating a musical interplay that is always enjoyable (and can be another way of overcoming complacency in often-played arrangements). But you have to be *listening* for those nuances in order to catch them.

You'll find that there is a political benefit to listening, too. You'll get along much better with the vocalists and soloists in your band if they realize that you are actively listening to their playing and trying to support them, rather than blazing your way through every tune, oblivious to what anyone else is doing. If you make a point of playing behind the vocalists and soloists when it's time to do so, they'll be much more willing to give you some room to stretch out yourself.

Listening also has its practical advantages, which include flexibility and the ability to respond quickly to "emergencies." If you can hear that the vocalist is having throat problems, you can adjust your volume level which, in turn, will likely bring the band's overall volume down. If the guitar player breaks a string or loses power during a solo, you might be able to cue in someone else to cover or even do so yourself. "On the spot" arrangement changes can be made if everyone is listening to everyone else and communicating on stage. And let's not forget that listening is the only known method of overcoming the "snowball effect"—that legendary situation that every band experiences. (Someone can't hear himself or herself adequately, so that person turns up, causing someone else to turn up in response, and so on until everybody is playing at a megadecibel level, and nobody—including the audience—can clearly hear anything.) I'm not suggesting that every style of music should be played softly. Appropriate volume levels are all relative to the style of music, the size of the room, and many other factors. My point is that, if *everyone* in a group is listening to *everyone else first,* it's easier to maintain a proper balance. It may also go a long way toward preventing hearing loss.

Listening *is* an art. And as is the case with any other art form, you must practice it constantly in order to achieve a high level of skill at it. But especially to the club drummer, the benefits of developing listening skills are enormous—benefits both musical and personal. Without those skills, even the most proficient technician is merely that: a technician. With them, a musician truly becomes an artist.

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Casio RZ-1 Digital Sampling Rhythm Composer

by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.

Casio has entered the field of hi-tech drum machines with its new MIDI-compatible *RZ-1* Digital Sampling Rhythm Composer. The *RZ-1* can store 100 patterns and 20 songs. It has 12 preset drum sounds, plus the facility for four user-sampled sounds. Casio utilizes an eight-bit Pulse Code Modulation (PCM) sound source. The preset sounds are: snare, rim, toms 1, 2, & 3, open and closed hi-hats, crash cymbal, ride cymbal, claps, and cowbell. Each voice has its own push-button key. Four additional keys are for Samples 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The *RZ-1* is capable of storing a total of 0.8 seconds of sample. The memory is divided into four 0.2-second samples (hence, the sample buttons numbered 1 through 4). Depending on the length of your sample, sample banks can be linked together. For instance, a bass drum sample would use only one bank, while a crash cymbal sample would require *all four* banks. Casio provides a cassette tape containing 91 different drum and percussion sounds for use as a sampling source. This, however, is just the tip of the iceberg, as the *RZ-1* can sample *any* sound you desire, via microphone or line input. More on the sampling section later.

The *RZ-1* does not have a tuning capability for any of its voices. However, this really can't be considered a major drawback, because if you don't like some of the factory tunings, you can always sample your own.

Programming can be done in either real-time or step recording. Ten resolution settings are available, ranging from 1/2 to 1/96. These settings are selectable at a ten-button keypad, which has other uses as well, such as calling up pattern and song numbers, setting time signatures, and setting pattern length. In step recording there are six levels of "swing factor" (what I refer to as the "drunken drummer"). The *RZ-1* also has other functions such as copy, edit, delete, insert, and chain. Three dynamic levels are available when programming: Normal, Accent, and Mute. (The latter two have their own separate push-button keys.) Tempo is adjustable from 40 to 250 beats per minute via two small buttons, which step the tempo setting either up or down. Variations in tempo are not programmable, though. An LCD window gives pertinent info, such as pattern or song number being played or recorded, tempo setting, and other programming data. In performing certain functions, the machine will first question your command, wait for a "yes" or "no" answer, and then confirm the command upon completion.

Programming a pattern is quite simple. One button gets the *RZ-1* into record mode. Then, via the keypad, you set the pattern number (01-99). The next step is to set the auto-compensate level, again via the keypad. Then finally, set up the time signature and pattern length. When these parameters are completed, pressing "start" will begin an automatic click, and you'll be ready to type in voices for your pattern.

One drawback of programming the *RZ-1* is that notes cannot exist simultaneously for certain pairs of voices: Tom 1/2, Tom 3/Bass Drum, Rim/Snare, Claps/Ride, Cowbell/Crash, and Open HH/Closed HH. If you're attempting to play a note at the exact same time in these above pairs, only the last voice inputted will be the one heard; the other is canceled out. It's a mystery to me why Casio has let this "flaw" creep into *the RZ-1.*

During playback, you cannot manually switch patterns without going to the Stop mode first. If you need to hear continuous different pattern numbers, they must be set up into Song mode, stepping each pattern number. A button labeled "Continue Start" will restart a pattern from the exact point it was terminated.

I found that the layout of the voice buttons can cause a problem at times in real-time programming. The bass drum is at the *left* of the snare drum, and the toms are set up with Tom 1 at the top, Tom 2 beneath it, and Tom 3 in the next row, opposite Tom 1. I feel that the button setup should be more like a real drumkit, so that drummers would be more comfortable using the machine.

The *RZ-1* has ten separate output volume sliders for mixing. (Since there are 16 total voices, some voices are doubled up on one control.) There is also an overall master volume slider. The back of the unit has ten separate line outputs (again, doubling up on some voices), left/right stereo outputs, a headphone jack, footswitch jack for remote operation, and MIDI In, Out, and Thru jacks. The *RZ-1* also has a high-speed cassette interface jack to store and retrieve programs on tape.

The sampling section has an input volume slider, with an LED to signal the beginning and end of sampling. A W input is provided, so you can sample off a microphone, cassette deck, synthesizer, etc. Next to the input jack is a mic'/line selector switch. Two tone controls in the back of the unit can be used to adjust the highs and lows of Samples 1 to 2 and 3 to 4 during playback. I tried sampling all sorts of stuff—sounds from the Casio cassette, bass guitar, voices, live drums and cymbals, other drum machines, etc.—and found the results to be pretty well exact. If the samples had hiss or other noise, the tone controls served to help reduce it. It should be pointed out that programmed patterns that use sampled voices will change their sampled notes if you change the samples in the internal memory. For example, if you sample a gated snare drum where a high conga sample was (let's say Sample 1), you will then have the newly sampled sound in your previously programmed patterns each time a Sample 1 note is played. All in all, the sampler in the *RZ-1* works well, giving true-to-form reproductions. And let's not forget the preset voices; they're all very good digital format sounds. I do have a complaint with the abrupt decay of the crash cymbal, but that's due to a small allotted memory space.

For $649 retail, you get a 16-voice digital drum machine with sampling capability, MIDI compatibility, and from what I'm told, a future capacity for linkup with Casio-made *drumpads* for live performance. In total, this is a pretty impressive package.

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Ron Spagnardi
Editor

INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

PARIS REUNION BAND HONORS CLARKE

The Paris Reunion Band is not only a celebration of the golden age of modern jazz in Paris, but is also a living, traveling, and performing salute to the father of modern jazz drumming, Kenny "Klook" Clarke. The innovative and influential drummer became the spiritual leader of the expatriate jazz community in Paris after settling there permanently in 1956.

It was to honor Kenny Clarke that his close personal friend, Nathan Davis (Professor of Music at the University in Kenny's hometown of Pittsburgh) conceived the idea of bringing together some of the musicians who played with Klook during his two and a half decades in Paris. Thus, the Paris Reunion Band was born, and it played its first series of engagements in Europe, touring the major jazz festivals in the summer of 1985. The band got a huge reception everywhere it played—hardly surprising when you consider the caliber of musicians in the band, and the high esteem in which the memory of Kenny Clarke is held. The band made its U.S. debut at the Blue Note club in New York City, June 17 through 22.

FARRIS, BLAIR, SILVA JOIN PEARL

Jon Farris, of INXS; Jim Blair, of Animotion; and Kenny Jo Silva, of John Cafferty & The Beaver Brown Band, have all recently become Pearl endorsers. All are currently touring, using kits featuring Pearl's *MX Series* maple shells. According to Pearl spokesman Todd Mauer, "We at Pearl are very glad to have Jon, Jim, and Kenny join our growing team of selected artists."

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BISSONETTE AND TUTT WITH BARCUS-BERRY

Barcus-Berry, Inc. recently announced that Gregg Bissonette, drummer for the new David Lee Roth band, is using Barcus-Berry drumhead pickups for sound reinforcement and electronic triggering. Additionally, Ron Tutt, long-time drummer for Neil Diamond, is using both the pickups and Barcus-Berry's *Krash Pad* as his entry into electronic percussion.

MAX ROACH PARK

Max Roach, known throughout the world as a composer, performer, lecturer, teacher, and actively astute political observer, has been honored in England by having a park named after him. Max Roach Park is in the neighborhood of Brixton, in London's Lambeth borough. Max's musical and political contributions were being celebrated elsewhere in London at the time, with his participation in two major events that strongly linked artistic expression and political statement: On March 16, at the Royal Albert Hall, the Greater London Council presented A Historical Concert In Dedication Of Africa's Contribution To The World. The concert featured the percussion of Ghanaba, from Ghana, and Max Roach accompanying Les Grands Ballet D'Afrique Noire. On March 19, the same Council sponsored an anti-apartheid concert in commemoration of the Sharpeville Massacre. This concert, again at the Royal Albert Hall, featured Max in the company of such renowned artists as Hugh Masekela, Letta Mbulu, and others.

DRUMMERS' HALL OF FAME

Respected author and teacher Frank Marino, along with noted drummer Michael Shrieve, are organizing a Drummers' Hall Of Fame. The Hall Of Fame is a nonprofit organization affiliated with the Long Island Music Teachers Association. The intention is to have exclusive film footage, rare recordings, all types of drum equipment, classic photographs, and other memorabilia. Annual induction ceremonies for new members are planned, and membership will not be limited to performers only. Manufacturers, inventors, educators, and other related artists will also be eligible. Tribute concerts, drum clinics, and other programs with living members are also planned.

Frank and Michael are seeking support for this effort, in the form of volunteers, contributions, financial donations, etc. Anyone interested in becoming involved with the Hall Of Fame should contact Frank Marino or Michael Shrieve, c/o Long Island Music Teachers Association, 82 Franklin Avenue, Franklin Square, NY 11010, or call (516) 746-2149 and leave a message.

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SONOR

JUST DRUMS

J&L EPROM SWITCHER

J&L Automation Systems, Inc., of Studio City, California, is currently marketing the *Prom-X-1* switcher, which puts the selection of multiple EPROMs at the user's command by the push of a button, and works in conjunction with many 28-pin EPROM-programmed drum synthesizers and drum machines. J&L Automation has recently concluded a distribution deal with Duraline Industries, which will have exclusive rights to distributorship outside California. Contact Duraline at 9624 Alpaca Street, South El Monte, CA 91733, or call (818) 443-7803. In California, contact J&L at 5330 Corteen Place, #2, Studio City, CA 91602, or call (818)508-7627.

MORAN DRUM MATE WORKOUT KITS

A new, totally silent practice kit has been developed by James Moran. Moran has also developed a workout program that combines the use of the kit with specific exercises of an aerobic nature, which he also claims to be psychologically stimulating. The practice drumkit and a taped exercise program are available from Moran Drum Mate, Inc., 5420 North College Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46220. Call (317) 251-3934 for further information.

NEW PREMIER HEADS AND HARDWARE

Premier Percussion, USA recently introduced a new series of drumheads developed with the aid of many professional players. The heads were created to cover an extensive range of playing requirements, including rock, jazz, live, and studio playing, as well as marching percussion. The series also includes timpani and specialty snare and batter heads. Six categories are available, varying in weight, plies, and coatings.

Also new from Premier is its *ProLock* hardware system, designed to make drum setup and dismantling easier and more precise through the use of a unique memory system. The key feature is a dual-function adjustment collar that can be operated as either a memory or telescoping clamp. Because the telescoping clamp and memory lock are integrated into one unit, there are no extra parts or additional adjustments involved. All of the stands are finished with Premier's *Diamond Chrome* plating. For further information, contact Premier Percussion, USA, Inc., 1704 Taylors Lane, Unit 1, Cinnaminson, NJ 08077.

CALZONE ULTIMA CASES

After an intensive period of research and development, the Calzone Case Company has introduced the *Ultima* series of super-lightweight, remarkably durable transport cases. The series is said to be the perfect protective complement to today's electronic equipment and instrumentation. The company states that, despite its strength and concern for protection, the *Ultima* series lists at less than half the cost of related A.T.A. cases, and less than non-protective bags for the same equipment. For specifications and other information, contact Calzone Case Co., 225 Black Rock Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06605, (203) 367-5766.

NEW PRODUCTS FROM SIMMONS

Simmons has released several new products, beginning with the *SDS1000* programmable five-piece drumkit. The kit is capable of producing both digital and analog sounds via the striking of Simmons' latest generation "floating head" pads. The kit features five factory and five user-programmable drumkits, each available at the touch of a button or a footswitch. The five factory kits come preprogrammed with a wide variety of sounds available, while the user patches are easily programmed from a number of independent parameters easily accessed from the rack-mountable unit.

Each drum sound has its own unique qualities. The bass drum is a similar design to the *SDS9* computer-generated kick drum, which accurately reproduces the "click" and "thump" of a well-miked acoustic kick drum. The snare pad accesses any one of four digitally sampled snare drums, including three acoustic snares (one with gated ambience) and one electronic snare. All four sounds can be varied on each of the ten kits via the parameter controls. Toms are the classic Simmons toms, with added "second skin" feature, which can be adjusted to create single- or double-headed tom sounds.

The *SDS1000* has MIDI capability via the new Simmons *TMI* (Trigger to MIDI Interface), which is available as an outboard accessory. The new drumkit is priced so as to be affordable for any working player interested in electronic drumming.

Also new from Simmons is the *SDC200* 200-watt RMS, five-channel amplifier specifically designed for use with electronic drumkits, and the *EPX-7,* a device to allow *SDS7* users access to four sounds per module rather than just one. For further information on any of Simmon's new products, contact Simmons Group Centre, Inc., 23917 Craftsman Rd., Calabasas, CA 91302, (818) 884-2653.

SPLATTER STICK BAG

New from Earth III is the *Splatter* Stick Bag, made of ripproof material with nylon filament running throughout, and featuring a heavy-duty zipper, shoulder strap, and three mounting straps for easy floor tom access. The bags have a unique red "splatter" design on black or translucent water-resistant material. For more information, contact Earth III Guitar Straps and Accessories, 11 Cebra Ave., Staten Island, NY 10301, (718) 981-3300.

PANTHER SERIES FROM SONOR

HSS, Inc. (Hohner Sonor Sabian) recently introduced the *Panther* series, a new Sonor drum series that features black *Phonic Hi-Tech* hardware and drums finished either in black or wine-red gloss. The kits feature deep-shelled drums of six-ply beech, and are available in five- or seven-piece models. For more information, contact your local distributor or HSS, Inc., P.O. Box 9167, Richmond, VA 23227, (804) 798-4500.

LP DRUMSET TIMBALES

LP Music Group is offering Drumset-Timbales, a pair of metal-shell timbales featuring drumkey tuning. The shells feature ribbed construction and structural improvements that, according to LP, make them brighter sounding than their predecessors. For further information, contact LP Music Group, 160 Belmont Ave., Garfield, NJ 07026.

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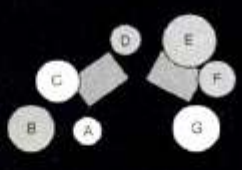

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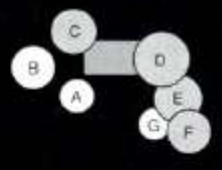

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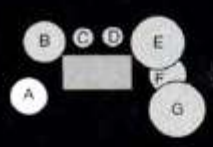

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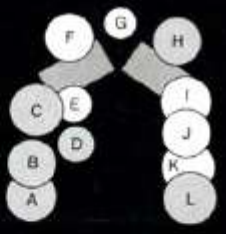

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